dissent

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A Path for America

Proposals from the Democratic Left

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

A Day in Buchenwald
JORGE SEMPRUN

Socialism and the Gift Relationship
MICHAEL WALZER

Feminism, Family, and Community
JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

The Cold War: Postrevisionism
DENNIS WRONG

Congress After the 1982 Election
THOMAS B. EDSALL

Is Utopia Dead?
ROBERT LEKACHMAN

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Beyond the Welfare State
Edited by Irving Howe

In the face of Reagan administration cutbacks in social programs, it may seem optimistic to put together a book about going *beyond* the welfare state. But the reaction against welfare may prove to be the final effort of the American right to return to a *laissez-faire* economy, which existed in theory but never in fact. In the belief that a modern industrial society must accept a large amount of governmental intervention, Irving Howe introduces some of the major social critics of our time who examine the inner dynamics and problems of the welfare state and its prospects for the future. These authors, all contributors to *Dissent* magazine, show why the welfare programs have failed both here and abroad and what could be done to make them succeed.

A Partial Table of Contents:

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Henry Pachter	Freedom, Authority, Participation
Robert A. Dahl	On Removing Certain Impediments to Democracy
Michael Walzer	Politics in a Welfare State
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THE LIBRARY JOURNAL

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FALL 1982

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A MARGIN OF HOPE

AN INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

IRVING HOWE

IRVING HOWE — esteemed literary critic and author of the bestselling *World of Our Fathers* — looks back on his life and times over the past five decades. A candid, perceptive account of his growth to intellectual manhood within the political movements and literary influences that shaped American culture.

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— usually for comments, more or less weighty, on topics of the day. But this time we want to break with our tradition and say a word or two about ourselves.

Dissent is now into its 29th year—a fact that astonishes us quite as much as it may you. For a little magazine of critical and often unpopular views, this is something of a record. We cannot claim to have done all we wanted to do, or to have done it as well as we hoped; still, there is something to be said for steady work. In these pages the democratic left and left-liberals have found a place to assert, think, speculate, argue, and doubt.

Over these 28 years, we've lived through several large shifts of national mood. There have been worse times than today—anyone whose youth was spent in the era of Hitler and Stalin knows that nothing could be more terrible than the year 1939. But I doubt that there has ever been a moment these past 28 years when large portions of the population—and we might as well be honest enough to admit, some portions of the left too—have felt so dispirited, so flat.

It's an interesting historical question, why certain moments should be characterized by a rise and others by a decline of hope, certain moments by a surging belief in a possible better future and others by skepticism. I don't know the answer; but I do think that political moods seem to sweep across the entire world, affecting different kinds of society and felt by people with varying opinions. You need only compare the early '60s with the early '80s.

But it's precisely at the kind of moment in which we now live that there is need stubbornly to keep asserting the idea of social transformation, the values of striving, energy, hope, idealism. For we know that, in unforeseen ways, social moods suddenly change and there is always a need for intellectual preparation. It's just when hope reasserts itself that it most needs the ally of thought. And it is to stimulate both hope and thought that we continue the work of putting out *Dissent*.

That's our job here—as long as flesh, blood, and printers allow us to do it.

We're now entering our 14th Fund Appeal, and there are friends who will have helped us (at least) 14 times. Understandably, people sometimes get tired of being asked for financial help—not everyone signs on for life. But a magazine like *Dissent* simply cannot be self-sustaining, despite our fanatical economies.

So, please, when you flip back a few pages and see our fund appeal, respond quickly and generously—in the 3 figures, if possible. To hell with the doldrums of the early '80s; on to the possibilities of tomorrow!

I. H. □

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Bernard Rosenberg

New Styles in Union Busting

Mr. Reagan, like his hero Cal Coolidge, turns out to be an accomplished union buster. (Was ever a union more skillfully finessed than the Professional Air Traffic Controllers? The adroitness of it all may be comparable to that of Silent Cal when he roused himself from his congenital torpor long enough to break a policemen's strike in Boston.) Reagan was once a union official in Tinseltown, his natural home. Then and there *Le Cowboy* must have been transformed into *Le Grand Simplificateur* that he is today. Long years on the corporate lecture circuit supplied him with the rhetoric he will never stop using. PATCO endorsed Reagan in 1980, and thought it would enjoy a quid pro quo when the time came to negotiate. Instead, 13,000 controllers—all those who refused to scab—were fired. The Great Communicator had sent his message: such a strike "against the government" was as reprehensible in this country as it was laudable in Poland.

Our unions are in trouble. They have been pummeled by corporate powers that never have come willingly to terms with them. Last year's big strike was to have been that of the aggrieved postal employees who instead—after the PATCO case—quickly accepted a minimal contract. Even though public-service unions only partly enjoy legality, they accomplished a great deal, not least for minorities previously all but excluded from decent white-collar employment. We have John Kennedy to thank for the recognition of organized public employees. But Kennedy's exertions produced no more than half a loaf, which is itself in danger of being whisked away just as labor ought to be reaching for the other half.

The results are bizarre. Bob Beving points out in *Turn Left* that "Janitors in the public and private sectors should enjoy the same basic rights. Air traffic controllers should enjoy the same rights as airline pilots, stewards and stewardesses." But they don't and they're not about to. When it comes to hard-won rights that to be sure were eroded by Taft-Hartley in 1947, public employees cannot even play the game. Let the government make an unacceptable offer on which it will not yield—and bargaining is terminated.

In the private sector, since 1935, employees unable to reach an agreement can ask for mediation and if that fails go on strike. Several states have specific mechanisms for dealing with deadlock, among them fact-finding by an impartial expert, mediation, arbitration and, as a last resort, the right to strike. None of these mechanisms is available to public employees.

The determination of what constitutes an employer's good or bad faith in the private sector is a function of the five-member National Labor Relations Board whose original purpose was to protect workers' rights, especially the right to unionize. The NLRB, while often under fire from labor, has at least been a forum for the workers' voice in important disputes, many of which have been fairly adjudicated. But how much can be expected of a board deliberately tipped in an antilabor direction? What of its new chairman, John Van der Water? Or of Mr. Reagan's latest appointee to the Board, one Robert Hunter, former aide to Senator Orrin Hatch and chief counsel of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, a body chaired by Hatch but including such liberals as Senator Edward F. Kennedy, which has unanimously voted to accept Hunter's nomination? The press reports that no AFL–CIO lobbyists were present at Mr. Hunter's hearing. When Daniel Williams, a *Boston Globe* columnist, wondered about this, Ray Denison, the AFL–CIO legislative director, explained, "Because it's not worth the candle. He's conservative, but not an ideological zealot."

What then is Robert Hunter, who boasts that his greatest achievement as Senator Hatch's aide was defeat of the Labor Reform Bill in 1979? That bill incorporated a number of NLRB reforms sought by labor. As an associate of the Heritage Foundation, Hunter wrote the labor section of *Mandate for Leadership*, a huge book that sets forth the New Right's strategy for social policy in the 1980s. He was head of the labor project that recommended restructuring of the Labor Department

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along precisely the lines that Raymond Donovan, this Administration's secretary of labor, has followed all year. His part of the Foundation report proposed *elimination of all public unions as well as enactment of a national right-to-work law through a constitutional amendment.* If such splendid ideas do not an ideological zealot make, what does?

With industrial employment in sharp and probably permanent decline, all that can save unions from desuetude is the organization of service workers. This, therefore, is the area of greatest resistance. Kinsey Wilson and Steve Askin, who have examined union-busting in depth, find that Modern Management, Inc., the worst offender (also known as 3M) "has sunk its deepest roots in the service sector of the economy." With the strategy of intimidation these technicians have perfected, management under their guidance has beaten the labor movement in more than nine out of ten cases.

A Labor Board packed with Reaganites can hardly be expected to accept mere equity in its decision-making. If, within a century or so, labor relations have gone substantially from status to contract, there is every reason to fear that they will soon return from contract to status: plenty of status for the well-heeled and their sycophants. A struggling colleague of mine, who must have been sorely tempted, was recently offered $1,000 a day plus perks—apparently the going rate—to join an outfit like 3M. He had the goodness to refuse. Others would jump at the chance.

The Last Resort?

PITTSBURGH, July 20 (AP) — Clapping, cheering, stomping and singing, about 8,000 people joined in a revival meeting at Three Rivers Stadium Monday night to pray for jobs in the financially troubled steel and coal industries.

"Pittsburgh needs a miracle—amen!" shouted the Rev. Gary A. Mitrik from short centerfield as his followers cheered from the stadium's box seats. "Satan and all your forces, we command you to get out of town and take your hands off our mills," said Mr. Mitrik, pastor of an evangelical church in Monroeville.

The prayer meeting was sponsored by four Pittsburgh businessmen who rented the city-owned stadium for $10,000.

—*New York Times*, July 21, 1982

Young people are being systematically recruited to abort or wreck the American worker's only hope for self-help, dignity, and decency. There are no more than a handful of academic labor institutes in the United States, which were designed to provide staff for unions. In these times they do not have enough poorly paid jobs for their graduates, some of whom sell their expertise as traitors to the cause of labor. And so the little countercurrent of unionism is sucked into a tidal wave of antiunionism.

BECAUSE THE OLD NLRB did something to resist this tidal wave, its composition now has to be altered. The unreconstructed NLRB first noted 3M's complicity in labor law violations during Jimmy Carter's last year, when it overturned an election at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, Connecticut, because of management's improper tactics. As Wilson and Askin point out, the decision fits innumerable cases in which a consulting firm has

> prepared much, and perhaps all, [of] the literature that the respondent [management] delivered to its employees. . . . supervisors were given instructions to speak to employees about the hospital's literature on a one-to-one basis. . . . agents of 3M reviewed with certain supervisors how these supervisors expected the employees in their respective departments to vote.

In Westbury, New York, only the hospital was charged with unfair labor practices. Finally legal action was taken against 3M itself last April in Milwaukee. The NLRB charged that 3M exercised "complete control and use of supervisory personnel at St. Francis Hospital in a systematic anti-union campaign consisting of illegal interrogations, promises of benefits . . . and threats of reprisals against employees for engaging in union activities." When Wilson and Askin wrote about this case in June 1981, they thought it might have far-reaching implications, "suggesting that Washington officials believe the time is ripe for moving against 3M." Other times, other officials.

Consultant firms like 3M are metastasizing at a great rate. Preemployment screening has become one of their specialties. They counsel against hiring prestige seekers, frustrated types, overqualified individuals "who may become on-site activists," or persons heavily in debt "who may become eager for a union-won increase." Alan Kistler, director of Organization and Field Services, AFL–CIO, who, along with his assistant Charles McDonald, keeps tabs on the union-busting racket, reports additional undesirable characteristics against which the employer is to guard himself, among them: sympathy

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for the underdog, involvement in liberal causes, a keen awareness of personal rights, or activism in tenant and consumer organizations. The well-known advice to keep blacks out as much as possible because they are more unionizable than whites has been extended to American Indians and Puerto Ricans. Mexicans and Cubans, on the other hand, are recommended as "cooperative" employees; so are women, older workers, the handicapped, retired military people, and students. Whether the consultants' characterizations are accurate or not (they are and they aren't), nonwork-related criteria for hiring and firing have become widely operative.

There is much more to this story. Robert L. Muehlenkamp, vice-president of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, has put the case as well as anyone can. I quote from part of his recent testimony (Feb. 26, 1981) before the New York State Assembly Labor Committee:

> The law of the United States, as expressed in the National Labor Relations Act, is to encourage the practice of collective bargaining. This law grew out of a recognition that when employers have absolute power, that power is abused. . . .
>
> The "consultants" (whether they are lawyers or not) do not accept this philosophy nor recognize the laws which incorporate it. They believe employers should have absolute power and employees should have no rights. . . . Whether they call it "maintaining a union-free environment" or "improving labor relations communication" does not matter: they do not believe in the laws of this country. . . .
>
> We are talking here about activities of "consultants" . . . employers engage . . . when the employees decide to exercise their rights under the law. . . .

With such home truths is the road back to square one paved. May they be remembered when the dismal politics of this period are finally cast aside. □

Stanley Engelstein

Supreme Court Sets Back Union Democracy

In 1959, Congress passed the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA), also known as the Landrum-Griffin Act, after extensive hearings into the corruption, dictatorship, and racketeering that existed in some major unions. The congressional goal, according to Senator McClellan, chairman of the Select Senate Committee, was to end "autocratic rule by placing the ultimate power in the hands of the members, where it rightfully belongs so that they may be ruled by their free consent, [and] may bring about a regeneration of union leadership."

Key provisions of the LMRDA's Title I, the "Bill of Rights of Union Members," sought to guarantee union members freedom of speech and assembly and the right to run for union office. However, the exercise of these rights was limited by a proviso permitting a union to pass "reasonable rules as to the responsibility of every member toward the organization as an institution." Courts have had to balance the rights of individuals specifically granted by the Act against legitimate interests of the union. The exercise of the right of free speech by advocating dual unionism, for example, would be considered disloyal to the union as an institution and legally subject to union discipline. Though courts in various jurisdictions have differed in their emphasis on individual rights versus institutional protection, they have generally protected the right of rank-and-file insurgents to run for union office.

An appalling decision handed down by the Supreme Court on June 14, 1982 in *United Steelworkers of America* v. *Sadlowski et al.* makes it virtually impossible for insurgent candidates seeking high union office to mount an effective cam-

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paign against an incumbent leadership. In a 5:4 decision, written by Justice Marshall and joined by Justices Powell, Stevens, Rehnquist, and O'Connor, the Court upheld as "reasonable" a 1978 amendment to the constitution of the USWA, "the outsider rule," which had imposed an absolute ban on the solicitation or acceptance of monetary or other material contributions by a candidate for International office from any person who is not a member of the union. The Court reversed the decisions of two lower federal courts, which had held that the outsider rule violated Title I, the "Bill of Rights" section of the LMRDA. The Supreme Court majority concluded that the union's "reasonable fear" that outside contributions might lead to *any* outside domination of candidates justified a total ban of outsider contributions of *any* kind or size. The Court cursorily rejected Sadlowski's argument that any legitimate concern the union might have about outside interference could be satisfied by placing ceilings on contributions and requiring disclosure of sources. In a landmark decision in 1973, *Hall* v. *Cole*, a different Supreme Court had held that Title I of the LMRDA was "specifically designed to protect the union member's right to seek higher office within the union." *Sadlowski* now prevents the union member from raising the necessary funds to run an effective campaign for such office. The right to campaign remains, but the act of campaigning could now easily become a futile exercise.

The scope of the outsider rule was summarized in the vigorous dissent written by Justice White and joined by Chief Justice Burger and Justices Brennan and Blackman:

•

> It is incredible to me that the union rule at issue in this case can be found to be a reasonable restriction on the right of Edward Sadlowski to speak, assemble, and run for union office in a free and democratic election. The scope and stringency of the rule cannot be doubted. It forbids any candidate for union office and his supporters from soliciting or accepting financial support from any non-member. The candidate cannot accept contributions from members of his family, relatives, friends, or well-wishers unless they are members of the union. . . . Retired members such as Edward Sadlowski, Sr., may not contribute, neither may members not in good standing. Even a fully secured loan from a non-member with a standard rate of interest is forbidden under the rule. . . . These regulations specify:
>
> > When prohibited support is contributed, there will be a presumption that it was accepted by the candidate or his supporters, unless they have taken affirmative steps in good faith to dissuade the non-member from providing such support and have taken action to correct the effects of the prohibited support. [App. 494]
>
> A candidate unable to rebut this presumption may be disqualified, fined, suspended, or expelled. This is a draconian rule. How could any candidate "correct the effects of the prohibited support"?
>
> The impact of the rule with respect to Edward Sadlowski, Sr., illustrates the rigor of the rule. It prohibits him from contributing to the campaign of Edward Sadlowski, Jr., even though the elder Sadlowski is the father of the candidate, was a charter member of the USWA, remained a member for 32 years prior to his retirement, and receives a USWA pension, the terms of which are negotiated by USWA's officers.

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The solicitation and acceptance of money from outside friends has been a widespread practice in the union movement. Until the USWA rule, no union had ever proposed any such ban on candidates' right to get funds. Why did the USWA, a union vaunting its democratic character, pass such a stringent rule, and why at this time?

It is an "iron law" of union life that incumbents in high office do not lose elections—though they may die, a fate they share with rank and filers, may retire, or may even be pushed aside in a "palace revolt" by another member of the "official family" (this was the label that I. W. Abel, ex-president of the USWA, candidly applied to the union leadership). However, since elections in which ballots are "secretly" cast and "honestly" counted must be held as a matter of law, as a matter of union policy they must not be lost.

IT WAS FOREORDAINED, therefore, that Sadlowski would get fewer votes than the administration-backed candidate when he ran for director of District 31, the union's largest district, in 1973. And so it happened. He lost.

Sadlowski then successfully challenged the legality of the election, charging that irregularities had affected the outcome. In a supervised, rerun election, Sadlowski won by a margin of 2:1! Then, in 1977, Sadlowski mounted the first complete rank-and-file slate for top offices in the union's 45-year history. In that election he was credited by the union with a quarter of a million votes, or 43 percent of the total, although his slate was able to post observers at only 800 of the 5,000 polling places. Yet the official family emerged intact from this unprecedented assault on its fortress.

Intact but nervous. It was not enough that Sadlowski had lost and that the Sadlowskis of the future would probably also lose. It was the up-

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heaval of the campaign itself—the rallying of large parts of the membership against the policies of the official family—that had to be eliminated by every possible means within the law. The people of the USWA are not, after all, the Teamsters or the Laborers, with their unofficial "families" at the ready.

The Union's first response to Sadlowski's challenge was to file a suit against the Association for Union Democracy and eight charitable foundations. The AUD is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the defense of union members' civil liberties and rights under the Landrum-Griffin Act. With the assistance of several foundations, it had set up an observer project at the union's 1977 election to monitor compliance with the law, since the attempt to steal the election in District 31 in 1973 had been only the most recent incident in a history of stolen elections in the USWA. (See John Herling, *The Right to Challenge.*)

The Union's complaint alleged that the AUD had "laundered" employer money funneled to it through the foundations in order to support Sadlowski in violation of the Landrum-Griffin Act. The suit was summarily dismissed as a matter of law by the Federal District Court and the Appeals Court. The Supreme Court refused to hear the case. In addition to filing suit, the official family

Sour Fruits of Reaganomics

You probably didn't notice because it was just a small item on a back page in a few papers and was totally absent in most papers and in the electronic media. But this datum tells us just about everything we have to know about what has increasingly come to be known as Reaganomics.

First, the fact. "American corporate leaders are continuing to scale back their plans for spending on expansion and modernization, the government reported today. The businessmen estimate a 2.4 percent decline this year from their 1981 outlays, after allowing for inflation." That's the lead in the story sent out by the Associated Press from Washington, D.C.

Plainly, American business is putting less into business this year than last year.

But it was not supposed to be that way. American business was given gigantic tax breaks so it would put more into expansion and modernization, to create new jobs and to make facilities more productive. They were given investment credits; they were given lower taxes on capital gains; they were given a 5 percent cut on personal income taxes, a benefit that added up to billions for an economic elite.

The rich were enriched because, it was proclaimed, their riches would enrich everyone as those great riches flowed into the economy—to expand and modernize.

But that money is not flowing into the economy; it isn't even trickling down; indeed less of it is being invested in 1982 than in 1981 before the great tax bonanza.

IN EXPLAINING what is happening, Commerce Sec. Malcolm Baldrige says: "The general downward revision in business investment reflects low levels of operation and the continuing interest-rate problems."

"Low levels of operation" means that facilities are being run at levels far below their capacity. Why? Because most of the people in this country —those who live on wages and salaries—have seen their buying power shrinking, so they can't buy; and our productive plant is idled.

"Continuing interest-rate problems" means that our interest rates are too high. But these high rates were set high as a means to restrain the economy, in the cockeyed belief that that's the way to check inflation.

But there is still another reason why businessmen are not putting money into their businesses. There is a faster way of making a fast buck: by speculation. Almost $83 billion went into businesses buying businesses last year instead of businesses expanding and modernizing businesses.

IF THE PRESIDENT and Congress really want to get businesspeople to invest productively:

Repeal the tax cut for the elite and give a better break to the other hard-working citizens.

Then tell the Federal Reserve Board to lower the interest rates.

Finally, raise the tax on capital gains (unless it is on new issues) so that speculation will be discouraged and true investment encouraged.

In other words, pursue Reaganomics in reverse.

GUS TYLER □

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decided to legislate its own immunity from electoral defeat: the outsider rule. It arranged for proadministration locals to propose resolutions at the union's convention that would bar outsider contributions. The rule itself was written by the union's general counsel and rubber-stamped by an administration-dominated convention.

IN UPHOLDING the outsider rule, the Supreme Court's majority opinion displayed a shocking ignorance about the realities of life in the union. It is not that the Court underestimated the importance of campaigns for a democratic union. Indeed, in an excellent statement of congressional intent in passing the Landrum-Griffin Act, the opinion states:

> [Congress] recognized that democracy would be assured only if union members are free to discuss union policies and criticize the leadership without fear of reprisal. Congress also recognized that this freedom is particularly critical and deserves vigorous protection, in the context of election campaigns. *For it is in elections that members can wield their power, and directly express their approval or disapproval of union leadership.* [Emphasis added.]

It is not even as if the Court failed to recognize that the outsider rule "does affect rights protected by the statute" and that a candidate's "ability to criticize union policies and to mount effective challenges to union leadership may be weakened." It is that the majority of the Court then concluded, by a leap into faith, that "as a practical matter the impact may not be substantial" and "in fact . . . the rank and file probably can provide support," since union members "earn sufficient income to make campaign contributions." *May not* be substantial! *Probably*!

The majority of the Court risks the candidate's ability to mount an effective campaign on the guess that what has never happened before will now begin to happen. Speculation on how much rank and filers will give in union elections is not warranted; the facts are in. In the hotly contested 1976–77 USWA campaign, the rank and file did not give much money to either Sadlowski or McBride. McBride got less than 10 percent of his campaign funds from the rank and file, despite the activity of virtually the entire staff on his behalf.

Ironically, now that the outsider rule has been upheld, rank and filers are less likely to give money to insurgent candidates since the name of every union member—the insider—who gives more than $5.00 to a candidate goes on a list submitted to a committee that is appointed by the official family to administer the rule. Thus the operation of the rule will tend to diminish those very rank-and-file contributions that the Court's majority relied upon as a ground for validation of the rule.

The Supreme Court opinion not only inflates the probability of rank-and-file contributions; it minimizes the advantages of incumbency. A candidate for the top offices in the USWA must try to reach the union's 1.3 million members, dispersed throughout the United States and Canada, who elect their officers by referendum vote. Incumbents have no problem in building the substantial war chest necessary for such a campaign.

If there is one factor that is certain and can be relied upon in union affairs, it is the utter loyalty of the appointed staff to the leadership. The staff constitutes a built-in campaign organization of individuals who will give their own money to the incumbent candidates and will solicit other members for more. As of January 1977 McBride, the administration candidate in the 1977 election, had received a total of $182,000, and more than 90 percent of it was obtained through "contributions" from union officers and staff. Though three of his running mates were staff members, Sadlowski and his slate received less than $5,000 from the staff.

The Supreme Court majority ignored these facts, which had been submitted to it by Sadlowski's attorneys; instead, it gave the official family's view of union-staff independence. The opinion states that staff officers are forbidden by law and by union rules from campaigning on union time—as if that formality had ever stopped this universal practice!

In a nugget of naïveté, the Court's opinion states that "staff officers have a contractual right to choose whether or not to participate in any USWA campaign without being subjected to discipline or reprisals for their decision." Any staff officer reading this will surely not know whether to laugh or to cry, particularly since the Supreme Court, less than a month earlier in *Finnegan* v. *Leu*, had ruled that elected officers are entitled to have a loyal staff and could legally fire appointed staff who had campaigned for the losing candidate.

THE LEGAL REASONING of the Court's majority opinion was as shoddy as its grasp of union affairs was bizarre. The opinion states:

> . . . specific provisions contained in Title IV [of the LMRDA] provide support for our conclusion that the outsider rule serves a legitimate and protected purpose. Section 401(g), 29 U.S.C. Sec 481(g), prohibits the use of employer as well as union funds in election campaigns. This ban reflects a desire to

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minimize the danger that employers will influence the outcome of union elections. A union rule that seeks to reduce the influence of outsiders other than employers is clearly consistent with that goal.

Under Title IV of the LMRDA, if a candidate using employer money wins an election, then the losing candidate, through the secretary of labor, can get the election invalidated and have a supervised, rerun election if it can be shown that the employer contributions were so substantial as to have affected the outcome of the vote. However, if a candidate who used employer money has lost the election, nothing happens. If the candidate has won with the use of employer money but the amount was insignificant and had no effect on the outcome, again nothing happens. In considering Title IV, Congress was concerned with the validity of the election itself, not with sanctions against candi-

The ERA Did Not Die in Vain

Is it not a disgrace that a society priding itself on its advoacy of human rights, on its sense of equality and individualism, would deny the symbolic recognition of these rights to women? It took a struggle of more than 70 years to obtain the women's right to vote. The fight for the Equal Rights Amendment, which began in 1923, may take as long. The reason is the same today as it was then: the general fear of the public, of men and women, that the official recognition of women's right to make individual decisions and to equality in the workplace will weaken their commitment to the family.

Just as the women's right to vote did not bring about their full equality or other basic changes in their social place to the extent that it was hoped or feared, so the ERA as such would not accomplish these aims either. Since 1890, 16 states have adopted an amendment for women's equal rights in their constitutions. And although this has helped in some cases to make sex discrimination illegal (as Ronald K. L. Collins has noted in the *New York Times*), American family life has suffered no more in these states than in those that have not adopted such amendments, nor have the more subtle types of discrimination been affected. Yet the passage of the ERA would have marked a symbolic stemming of the tide of sexism and would have helped to facilitate legal improvements.

But the ERA has not died in vain. The struggle for it during the last decade has had its unanticipated consequences: it has raised the consciousness of men and women, and it has brought about important changes through laws and other court actions. Not only have women moved massively into the labor force, but their husbands have begun to share women's traditional family responsibilities. Now both women and men demand equality on the job, in education, and in business.

According to a study by Patricia Gurin of the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan, women have become more identified as a group. "When presented with a list of more than a dozen groups, women have increasingly chosen "women as a group to which they feel similar in ideas, interests, and feelings." The percentage of women in Gurin's sample who identified with the group "women" rose from 34 percent in 1972 to 67 percent in 1979. Similarly, in 1972 only 33 percent, but 55 percent in 1979 of the women questioned attributed disparities in opportunity between men and women to discrimination rather than to individual deficiencies. Men too increasingly have acknowledged that the system discriminates against women. Yet Gurin also found that "there has been no strong support among women for the idea of organizing and acting together to bring about change" (*ISR Newsletter*, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Spring/Summer 1982, pp. 4–5).

These two trends, taken together, demonstrate an increased awareness of injustice but a reluctance, except for a minority of women, to translate this awareness into action. This fact explains, in part, why the country seems divided, almost in half, in regard to the passage of the ERA. Another reason for this reluctance, as mentioned above, is the general resistance to grant women the right to individual decisions and accomplishments to the degree that they are enjoyed by men, because it is feared—whether rightly or wrongly is not to the point here—that the family would suffer. One more stumbling block is that it is hard for women, as Alice Rossi has shown years ago, to constitute an independent militant group because of their intimate relationships with men. Yet since now men along with women are beginning to recognize the injustices of the system, the Equal Rights Amendment is not as far away from passage as some may think.

ROSE LAUB COSER □

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dates who participated in the election. By contrast, a breach of the union's outsider rule could lead to disqualification, fine, suspension, or expulsion of the candidate. Where Congress under Title IV invalidated the election, the official family under the rule incapacitates the candidate. Where Congress sought to minimize employer influence on union affairs because of presumptive antiunion bias, the outsider rule seeks to exclude all outsiders from contributing to insurgent candidates *because of presumptive antiadministration bias.**

If Title IV gives no support to the validity of the outsider rule, despite the analytic legerdemain of the Supreme Court's majority opinion, the application of the outsider rule will in fact help to realize the policy underlying Title IV. Since the immediate effect of the rule will be to render nugatory any insurgent campaign, there will be less need to create phantom voters or misplace opposition ballots. Elections will become honest insofar as opposition withers away; Title IV prescriptions for honest elections will become normal operating procedure. Was it perhaps in this ironic sense that the Court's majority found the outsider rule to be "consistent" with the policy of Title IV?

By its application of the "rational relation" standard to establish the "reasonableness" of the outsider rule, the Court's majority opened the door to further incursions into rights of union members. The opinion concludes: "Although [the USWA's rule] may interfere with rights Congress intended to protect, it is rationally related to a legitimate and protected purpose, and thus is sheltered by the proviso to Sec. 101 (a) (2) [a provision of the LMRDA Bill of Rights]." Thus when a union passes a rule to avert some danger to it "as an institution," it need not prove that the danger truly is real. Since outsider contributions could logically lead to outside domination of candidates, the union's fear becomes "reasonable," and it is not irrational for that union to ban all outside contributions in order to prevent the possibility of any outside interference.

One may now expect that many a clever rule for the perpetuation of incumbent domination in a union will be seeking shelter in this proviso. In effect, the Court's decision has turned the Bill of Rights on its head. The proviso has swallowed the Rights; the exception has taken precedence over the rule. Instead of seeking some middle ground, such as imposing ceilings on contributions and requiring disclosure—a modification of the absolute ban that would have adequately satisfied the union's concerns while preserving the values of union democracy—the Court's majority acquiesced completely and crudely to all the demands of the union's leadership.

ISSUES OF UNION DEMOCRACY split conventional alliances and make for bizarre alignments. It is not often that Chief Justice Burger joins Brennan in dissent or that Rehnquist signs Marshall's opinion for the Court. Ideologies fail as predictors where individual union members' rights come into conflict with union leaders' interests.

For some liberals, raised on the concept of progressive trade unionism, bureaucratic rule is a price worth paying for a "strong" trade union movement. For some conservatives, firm and unchanging union leadership makes for institutional stability and industrial peace. Democracy means turmoil; insurgency forces unpredictable power adjustments. True "libertarians" who see even union membership as a violation of some anarchistic ideal will defend the concept of individual rights regardless of its effect on the unions. Antiunion "libertarians" such as the National Right to Work Committee litigate for the "rights" of workers in order to weaken unions. Supporters of the Association for Union Democracy believe that only a democratic trade union movement truly responsive to its membership can grow and perform the progressive role that it is uniquely capable of in a democratic society.

Though the coalition of judges in *Sadlowski* was unpredictable, the result is not inconsistent with the Court's overall conservative cast. Institutional stability outweighed democratic rights. This "stability," ironically, may contribute further to the present decline of the labor movement.

When a relatively democratic union such as the Steelworkers legally establishes a permanent fiefdom for its official family, it may well lose whatever is left of its appeal to unorganized workers. We may be sure that the victory of the official family of the USWA over its own rank and file is being celebrated today by the country's powerful and growing antiunion forces. □

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* The Court's majority opinion considers the absolute ban on all outsider contributions to be "consistent" with the ban on employer contributions. This is an example of the elementary, logical fallacy of composition in which a property of some members of a class is attributed to all members of the class. The Court's implied syllogism is as follows: all employers are outsiders; all employers are presumed to be antiunion. Ergo: all outsiders are presumably antiunion. This reasoning is similar to the following: all federal judges are human beings; all federal judges are unbiased. Ergo: all human beings are unbiased.

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Thomas B. Edsall

A Letter from Washington: Congress After the 1982 Election

As we go into the 1982 elections, we face two related but separate sets of questions:

(1) Will Democrats make significant gains in House elections and either weaken the GOP majority in the Senate or eliminate that majority altogether? And, conversely, will Republicans pick up enough Senate seats to ensure control for four to six more years and hold their own in the House?

(2) Will the rightward trend—which was reflected in a clear conservative majority in Congress at the mid-point of Carter's term and reached unprecedented heights with the 1981 budget reconciliation bill and tax cut—continue to dominate the federal government, no matter what the partisan shifts after the November elections?

The 1982 election results will be determined as much by the economy as by anything else. At this writing, most economists are predicting a weak recovery; but any upward trend is likely to benefit the party in power. Although unemployment is at its highest since World War II, with over 10 million people out of work, and bankruptcies are endemic, neither has caught political fire. Democrats proposed a $3 billion job program (for 1982 alone), but this initiative died in the budget debate, as the issue of deficit-spending submerged all other questions.

The Democrats have, however, gained a significant edge in the past year on the issue loosely described as equity and fairness. In 1981 the Reagan administration won approval of tax legislation that targeted the largest reductions to the rich and to capital-intensive corporations, while initiating budget cuts that fell most heavily on the poor, particularly the working poor.

The Administration is seeking to encourage productivity and savings by the wealthy and the business community through a series of tax incentives, while increasing the "cost" of work to those with incomes from $8,000 to $15,000 by forcing reductions in Food Stamp, welfare, and Medicaid benefits for every dollar earned through work. For certain families, particularly those dependent on Medicaid for their medical treatment, these budget reductions are the equivalent of a tax rate well in excess of 100 percent on income earned at the range where the eligibility cutoffs from benefit programs begin.

This policy has been possible largely because most of the beneficiaries of welfare programs and most of those earning marginal incomes do not vote. According to recent census data, those earning less than $20,000 a year make up more than half of the population (55.1 percent), but their turnout rate is more than 20 percentage points below that of persons earning more than $20,000. In addition, the large majority of the nation's blacks is concentrated in the income groups earning below $20,000 a year. It is one of the ironies of American politics that black loyalty to the Democratic party has, in recent years, resulted in the party's declining response to black concerns. The black vote is neither a growing nor a competitive arena, and consequently it has been taken for granted in general elections and legislative decisions. So far, it remains a force mainly within the Democratic primaries.

The situation that now is facing the Democrats is reflected in the advice given House Speaker Tip O'Neill by party pollsters: "It's all right to attack the wealthy, but don't defend the poor."

A number of shifts in the electorate are working in favor of the Democrats. The GOP's continued talk of cutting back on Social Security has caused deep anxiety among older people. Women, particularly working women, are becoming increasingly disenchanted with the GOP and Reagan. The nu-

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clear-freeze movement has an underlying anti-Reagan and anti-Republican edge. And any further expansion of U.S. involvement in El Salvador or other foreign trouble spots will work against the Republicans.

Some of the budget cuts will come home to roost just before election day and will, in some cases, affect groups of Americans who vote in large numbers. Cutbacks in college-assistance programs will be felt this fall. In many states, extended unemployment benefits—going for an extra 13 weeks to many of the blue-collar workers who switched to the GOP in 1980—will be eliminated on September 25, unless Congress intervenes. These cuts will be compounded by whatever reductions Congress makes in programs to meet the 1983 budget targets. And if the Senate Finance Committee is any gauge, up to $3 billion will be cut from Medicare.

These GOP difficulties will be compounded by the mandate of the budget resolution to raise taxes by nearly $100 billion over the three fiscal years from 1983 through 1985. Democrats are letting Senate Republicans take the initiative here, so that the GOP will have to bear the complaints from corporate interests that will have to pay many of the new taxes. (This process, however, is not merely a liability for the Republicans; they now seem to be able to correct some of the earlier abuses.)

ALL IN ALL, however, Congress is almost certain to maintain its conservative posture after the 1982 election.

The basic reason is money. The GOP has developed mechanisms of financing campaigns so effectively that not only marginal incumbents are given the maximum legal backing ($68,000 in a House race in party money alone), these funds have also enabled the party to develop a growing roster of new electoral candidates. These party financing ventures include the granting of maximum contributions to primary winners; the training of candidates in the handling of television appearances and diffusing controversial questions; access to extraordinarily detailed polling data; use of computer information detailing an opponent's voting history and the records of presidential candidates. Perhaps more important than the party money is the ability of the Republicans' party structure to provide its people an entrée to the business and trade associations. Shifting from a mid-1970s posture of supporting incumbents—mostly Democrats—the business and trade association committees (PACs) now are giving funds to the GOP in about a 60:40 ratio. In the key marginal races, where the composition of the next Congress will really be determined, this ratio is shifting to 80:20.

The GOP now is functioning as *a party*. It is a source of money, training, and discipline. The Democratic party, in comparison, is almost nonexistent.

This resurgence of the Republican party has brought about the emergence of a smaller subset within the business and trade association PAC community that is willing to take a very aggressive posture in support of pro-business, conservative challengers. Its hard core is Sunbelt business, including a network of independent oil PACs—Dallas Energy PAC, Houston PAC, Louisiana National Energy PAC—and such firms as Fluor, Brown & Root, Dart & Kraft, Coors, Amoco, Eaton Corp., and Bechtel. Backed up by such major trade associations as the Realtors' PAC and the American Medical PAC, these groups are actively seeking out candidates in the Northeast and Midwest to challenge liberal incumbents. In 1980, the willingness of these groups—backed up by such organizations as the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and the Conservative Victory Fund—to get early into key Senate races was a major factor in the shift to the GOP: of the seats taken over by Republicans, 8 out of 12 were won by margins of 2 percent or less.

This year, funds received from these interest groups are being channeled into races where freshmen Republicans have a tenuous grasp on their districts. This help is extended to the challengers of such liberal Democratic incumbents as Rep. Fortney Stark (D–Calif.), Rep. Bob Edgar (D–Pa.), and Sen. Quentin Burdick (D–N.D.); to Republicans forced by redistricting to face serious Democratic challenges; and to Boll Weevil Democrats who voted for the Reagan budget and tax bills. This last bit of bipartisanship now is cementing the revived alliance of Republicans and Southern Democrats that has taken over control of the House since the 1980 election.

In theory, the amount of money channeled by these organizations to candidates of the political right could be largely offset by organized labor, along with some of the nascent liberal PACs that are beginning to spring up. But labor, more loyal to Democrats than business is to the GOP, faces two major difficulties. In many of the Southern, Western, and rural states where the competitive seats are located, backing by labor is more of a liability than backing by the oil industry. The aggressive business PACs, on the other hand, are often new,

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and without ties to incumbents. They see their task in the financing of a radical alteration of Congress and are prepared to target their money to key swing races, where an accumulation of $5,000 contributions (the maximum allowed) makes a big difference. Organized labor, in contrast, is bound to a whole network of incumbent Democrats, many elected in the 1960s and early '70s. These incumbents often hold safe seats, but they have insisted on getting large backing from labor, in part to have money to spread among local political organizations at election time and in part to make sure no potential opponent gets big ideas. Labor has acceded to this process, and as a result, much of its money has been wasted on campaigns that did not need it. There are some signs that this year labor will change its contribution patterns and seek out marginal races, but it is too early to tell the degree of effectiveness.

It is unlikely that 1982 will see a repeat of the 1980 swing of 12 votes to the GOP in the Senate. More Democrats now will be up for reelection—21 of the 33 open seats. Many of these incumbents are vulnerable: Quentin N. Burdick of North Dakota; George J. Mitchell of Maine; James R. Sasser of Tennessee; and conceivably Senate minority leader Robert C. Byrd. The Abscam conviction of Harrison A. Williams of New Jersey, which resulted in his resignation, has given the GOP a strong shot at his seat. And independent Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, who has voted to help form the Democratic minority, is retiring and is almost sure to be

Latin America and Democracy

We print below the first few paragraphs of Octavio Paz's brilliant essay on Latin American history and society, which forms the opening item in a paperback, Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America, *issued by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas. If you would like to read the rest of this, as well as the other nine essays by eminent Latin American writers, please turn to our back cover for information on how to obtain this publication.* — EDS.

Mistaken ideas about the historical reality of Latin America have been appearing for almost two centuries. There is not even an exact name to designate this reality: should it be "Latin America," "Hispanic America," "Iberoamerica," "Indoamerica"? Each of these names ignores one part of its complexity. Economic, social, and political labels are equally misleading. The concept of "underdevelopment," for instance, may be applied to economics and technology, but not to art, literature, moral values, or politics. The expression "Third World" is vaguer still. The term is deceiving as well as imprecise. For instance, what relationship exists between Argentina and Angola, Thailand and Costa Rica, Tunisia and Brazil? Despite two centuries of European domination, neither India nor Algeria changed its language, religion, or culture. The same may be said of Indonesia, Vietnam, Senegal, indeed, of most of the former European possessions in Asia and Africa. Iranians, Hindus, and Chinese belong to civilizations unlike that of the West.

We Latin Americans speak Spanish or Portuguese; we are or have been Christian; our customs, institutions, arts and literature are direct descendants of those of Spain and Portugal. For all these reasons we are one outpost of the West in America; the other is the United States and Canada. But as soon as we admit that we are an extension of Europe overseas, all the differences between us and the Europeans spring into view. They are many and they are decisive.

• The first is the presence of non-European elements. In many Latin American nations there is a substantial population of Indians, and in others of blacks. The exceptions are Uruguay and Argentina and, to a lesser degree, Chile and Costa Rica. Some of the Indians are descendants of the advanced pre-Columbian civilizations of Mexico, Central America, and Peru; a somewhat smaller number of others are left over from the nomadic tribes. All of them, the former especially, have refined our countries' sensitivity and aroused our fantasy. Furthermore, many traces of their cultures appear in our beliefs, institutions, and customs, mixed in with our Hispanic heritage: the family, social morals, religion, legends and folk tales, mythology, arts, cooking. The presence of blacks has also had a great influence, tending, it seems to me, in the opposite direction from that of the Indians. While the latter suppress their emo-

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replaced by a Republican. Democrats, conversely, have a potential chance of taking over GOP Senate seats in Connecticut, Utah, and, if the economy worsens, in a number of other states.

But perhaps the most important element that might affect the elections is the tarnishing of many of the conservatives' claims. The economy has failed to respond to supply-side tax cuts. The Administration's military vigor has created more anxiety than it has resolved doubts. At the same time, aside from Ted Kennedy, there are not many prominent liberals up for reelection who will prompt conservatives to spend money in order to defeat them.

In the House, prospects for the Democrats may be significantly more favorable. There, in the key races, many Gypsy Moth Republican representatives of beleaguered Frostbelt districts will have to spend much of their electioneering time justifying their support for the Reagan budget and tax cuts.

But, at this early stage, these are merely conjectures and notes on a highly unpredictable process.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR that will determine the complexion of the 98th Congress will be, to repeat, money. Not only does the business-conservative alliance of political action committees provide a financial edge that will reduce the effects of small shifts to the left in the electorate; but these groups,

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tions and cultivate reticence and inwardness, the former celebrate orgiastic, sensuous values.

• The second, no less profound difference comes from something that is very often forgotten, namely, the peculiar brand of Western civilization embodied in Spain and Portugal. Unlike their English, Dutch, and French rivals, the Spanish and the Portuguese were dominated for centuries by Islam. But to speak in terms of domination is deceiving; we still find the splendor of the Spanish Arabic civilization astonishing, and those centuries of struggle were also a time of intimate coexistence. Moslems, Jews, and Christians lived together on the Iberian peninsula until the 16th century. It is impossible to understand either the history of Spain and Portugal or the truly unique nature of their cultures if this fact is forgotten. The fusion between religion and politics, for example, or the notion of *crusade*, appears in Hispanic attitudes to a heightened and more intense degree than in other European countries. It is not farfetched to see in these characteristics the traces of Islam and the Islamic vision of the world and of history.

• The third difference, I think, has been the decisive factor. The modern world was ushered in by a series of events that include, together with the Reformation and the Renaissance, European expansion in Asia, America, and Africa. This movement began with the discoveries and conquests of the Portuguese and the Spanish. However, soon after, and with equal violence, Spain and Portugal closed their doors, locked themselves in, and rejected the modernity that was just dawning. The Counter-Reformation was the most complete, radical, and coherent expression of this rejection.

The Spanish monarchy identified itself with a universal faith and with a unique interpretation of that faith. The Spanish king was a mixture of Theodosius the Great and Abd-er-Rahman III, first Caliph of Cordoba. (The pity is that the Spanish rulers imitated the sectarian politics of the former and not the liberal tolerance of the latter.) And so, while other European states showed an increasing tendency to represent the emerging concept of the nation and to defend its values, the Spanish state confused its cause with that of an ideology. The general evolution of society and of the modern states tended to affirm the individual interests of each nation—relativizing politics, stripping it of its once sacred aura. The idea of the universal mission of the Spanish people, as defenders of a doctrine thought to be just and true, was a medieval and an Arabic legacy; once injected into the doctrine of the Hispanic monarchy, it first inspired the actions of this monarchy, but eventually immobilized it. The strangest thing is that this theological-political conception has reappeared in our time. Nowadays, however, it is not identified with divine revelation; it wears the mask of a so-called universal science of history and society. Revealed truth has become the "scientific truth" of Marxism, incarnate not in a Church and a Council but in a Party and a Committee. . . .

OCTAVIO PAZ □

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which can wield the threat of "targeting" to defeat liberal Democrats, have chilled the Democrats' moderate-to-liberal wing in Congress. In the congressional voting on such issues as the regulatory powers of the Federal Trade Commission, corporate tax-rate cuts, inspection powers of the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, and a host of others that arise daily, the threat of being targeted by such groups as the Chamber of Commerce, the Business and Industry Political Action Committee, the Independent Petroleum Association, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, or the Realtors has a powerfully inhibiting effect.

Taking It on the Chin

The following item about the sufferings of unemployed workers comes from the ultraconservative magazine, Business Week, *May 31, 1982. There is no reason to believe that by the time you read this in* Dissent *things will be any better:*

Only 39 percent of the unemployed are eligible for benefits of any sort, a remarkably low number for the depths of a recession. Labor Dept. analysts suggest that this may be because the 1981–82 recession came so closely on the heels of the 1980 slump that many workers did not get back on the job long enough to qualify for full benefits.

Many of these workers no longer enjoy the other protections they once had. In a number of major industries, notably auto, rubber, and steel, an unemployed worker could expect something close to his regular pay from a combination of unemployment insurance and company-provided supplementary unemployment benefits (SUB). But these funds are running dry. In the steel industry, five of the largest producers have cut off SUB benefits altogether, while laid-off U.S. Steel Corp. employees are getting only 30 percent of the regular payment. The United Rubber Workers' new master contract provided a special infusion of SUB funds, but these will not last much longer. Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler are paying benefits only to workers with very high seniority, and then at a reduced rate. □

The Reagan administration, no matter how its economic policy fares, achieved an extraordinary political victory with the passage of the 1981 tax cut, reducing federal revenues by $749 billion through 1986. Because of the Reagan tax cut, the issue of deficit-spending will dominate Congress for years to come. Even with a tax increase of $21 billion for 1983 and about $100 billion through 1985, the deficit in 1983 will be at least $110 billion. Even in the unlikely event that Democrats take over the Senate, the driving force in 1983 will continue to be deficit reduction. There can be no more effective central issue for conservatives than deficit-spending. Therefore, the major approach the Reagan administration advocates still is the continued reduction of domestic spending programs. And defense spending now is likely to be slowed. Yet surely, the Administration has won approval of its long-range commitments in the form of budget authority, and it will be extremely difficult to put a stop to that.

Finally, a significant alteration of the tax system may be in the offing. The potential for such a change has already emerged in the growing debate over various "flat tax" alternatives. For such a major tax debate the unions, the beneficiaries of social programs, and other groups representing citizens earning less than the median income are even worse equipped than in the debate over social-spending reductions—yet surely, any drive for a major simplification of the tax system has a great potential for lessening the burden on the rich, and for increasing the burden of Americans in the lower income brackets. Not only has our tax law been the terrain of lawyers and lobbyists representing corporations and the rich, but any simplification of the rate structure will tend to reduce the existing progressivity—unless significant and politically difficult steps are taken, either to retain overall progressivity through rate steps or to raise personal exemptions high enough to protect those now in the lower brackets.

Given the pressure of the tax cut and the political strength of business and conservative organizations, it seems likely that the agenda of the 98th Congress will remain an essentially Republican agenda, no matter what the formal composition of the House and Senate turns out to be. □

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Michael Harrington

A Path for America

Proposals from the Democratic Left

The American welfare state is in a profound crisis, and not just because the affably mean, pragmatic ideologue who is president of the United States is destroying some of the most important gains ever made by the people of the United States. That is merely one more sign of a historic turning point: the end of the second stage of the welfare state in this country, and the beginning of the battle over the third stage.

The first stage lasted from 1933 to 1939 when Franklin Roosevelt, with consummate political skills and little conceptual sense of what he was doing, improvised a series of responses to the Great Depression. America was thereby dragged into the 20th century, about 50 years after Bismarck and 30 after Lloyd George. Unemployment was reduced by 40 percent but remained at 15 percent of the work force until we got war-induced full employment. The Depression was ameliorated; yet the Gross National Product (GNP) dropped by more than 7 percent in the 1938 recession. Social Security, the heart and soul of the welfare state, was enacted—and so was Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) was added as an afterthought, with the expectation that it would soon become unnecessary.

World War II was the only time government intervention really fulfilled its economic promise, but also an exception since it required a global conflict to dragoon our society into economic rationality. Nonagricultural employment was 30.6 million in 1939—almost a million workers less than in 1929. By 1944 it had shot up to 32.4 million. The GNP in 1940 was $99.7 billion, well under the level of $103.1 billion achieved in 1929. It rose to $210.1 billion in 1944. This was done even though some 15 million Americans were in uniform. Not coincidentally, the war years marked one of the greatest gains for blacks and women in American history.

The second stage of the welfare state lasted from 1946 to 1969, culminating in a euphoric "golden age" under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. There was a tremendous increase in employment, income, and GNP: from $208.5 billion GNP in 1946 to $930.3 in 1969, more than a fourfold increase; from 57 million workers in 1947 to nearly 80 million in 1969. There were, to be sure, recessions in 1949, 1953, and 1959, with American unemployment rates significantly higher than those in the European welfare states. Inflation was higher in this country, too, but even though Vietnam raised the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Johnson's last three years, the average rate of CPI increase for the Kennedy-Johnson period was still a mere 2.2 percent.

Small wonder that, particularly during the Kennedy and Johnson period, the notion came to the fore of a crisis-free, ever-expanding economy with stable prices. The "New Economics" congratulated itself on having solved the basic contradictions of the system by means of "fine tuning." This was, said Walter Heller, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers from

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1961 to 1964, "the age of the economist." Lyndon Johnson proudly declared in his final economic message to Congress (January 1969) that "No longer do we view our economic life as a relentless tide of ups and downs. No longer do we fear that automation and technical progress will rob workers of jobs rather than help us to achieve greater abundance." And Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote in 1969 that the problem of "fiscal drag"—constantly increasing government revenue as a stable or even declining share of an exploding GNP—meant that "administrations must be constantly on the lookout for new ways to expend public funds in the public interest."

Given the "end of ideology," which resulted from this unprecedented situation, we were told the political decisions were now merely technical and expert, a characteristic of the "postindustrial" (which had to mean postcapitalist) society. In fact, of course, the 1960s' euphoria was permeated by ideological assumptions.

> Central to all political capitalism, and especially to its American variant [*Walter Dean Burnham has written*] was the denial of the fundamental contradiction between accumulation and consumption. More positively, the assumption was that social harmony could and would exist so long as the state compensated for the inadequacies of market capitalism without touching the core of capitalism itself.

In the 1970s, the crisis of the second stage of the welfare state brought this idyll to an abrupt end. It was Richard Nixon who encountered the new reality but, much as one would like to blame that scoundrel for almost anything, in this case it was not his fault. Had Hubert Humphrey been elected in 1968, he would have had to face the same problem and his response, though preferable to Nixon's, would have been almost as inadequate. The collapse of 25 years of historical trends, along with the ideologies that explained them, was not the "fault" of individuals; it was part of a massive tendency of the society as a whole. What is involved is a crisis of the very structure of the welfare state—and the consequent imperative to develop structural reforms for its next or third stage.

BEFORE EXAMINING THIS CRISIS, it is important to sketch the achievements of the second stage of the welfare state. This is a political, as well as an analytic, necessity since the strategy to be outlined here sees radical reform as the only means of defending *and* deepening the gains of the past.

In a study that tends, if anything, to deemphasize the extent of poverty in the United States, the Congressional Budget Office showed that, in 1976, one-fourth of the American people would have been poor had it not been for public transfer payments. That is, the "normal" workings of the economic system left 21.4 million families impoverished. In that year 10.7 million families were kept above the poverty line through government action. The single group benefiting the most from this process is precisely the one that receives the bulk of welfare-state spending: the aging. Roughly two-thirds of federal nondefense monies go to people over 65 years of age through Social Security, Medicare, the 40 percent of Medicaid devoted to seniors, and so on. In 1978, then, the poverty rate among the aging was about half of what it had been in 1968. So much for the famous assumption that "throwing money at problems" never works; when the problem is a lack of money, it does work.

The aging, however, were not the only group to advance during the second stage of the welfare state. In the 25 years between 1947 and 1972, real wages measured in constant (1977) dollars increased in every year except two and were 60.6 percent higher at the end of that period than at the beginning. One can argue endlessly about the contribution of government policy to this progress—did Washington stimulate the boom or mainly get a free ride out of it? But it is clear that a growing sophistication about macroeconomic tactics had some positive effect. At the same time, it should be stressed that the gain in living standards was not the result of a redistribution of income and wealth. The relative shares of the social classes remained stable and the upward trend in real wages was financed out of economic growth rather than egalitarian policies. Indeed, in this period the percentage of the labor force enrolled in unions—a critical index

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of the *political* power of the people in a welfare state—declined.

Even though the success of the second stage of the welfare state was accompanied by a minimum of institutional change, it was quite real. There was a quarter of a century in which, with an anomaly or two, each year was better than the last in terms of buying power. There were also significant social gains. Affirmative Action programs for minorities and women made some—limited—impact; there was a tenfold increase in the funds for public higher education between 1950 and 1970; by 1980 almost 17 percent of the population held college degrees. And in a series of laws in the late '60s and early '70s Washington finally took some minimal responsibility for the protection of the environment.

Let there be no mistake then: life was significantly better in 1970, at the end of the second stage of the welfare state, than at the beginning, in 1945. Thus any serious socialist critique of the welfare state must have as its first premise a defense of these gains. And the fact of the matter is that, since the economy began to suffer from chronic crisis around 1970, all the achievements of that quarter-century have been under attack. It is not just that real wages have declined from the high of 1972 to a level that had been reached as early as 1963. Social Security is under attack for the first time in its history, and the demand to roll back the living standards of the aging comes from Democrats as well as Republicans; Affirmative Action is being scapegoated as a cause of lower productivity; and there is a massive campaign to "solve" the problems of the economy by increasing the degradation of the environment.

The status quo is not an option for the '80s. There will be either radical innovation in a regressive direction—already begun by Reagan—or radical innovation in a progressive direction. Liberalism, which is as far left as America has ever gone, will have to go a good deal beyond itself if it is even to preserve what it has already won. Socialism is not on the immediate agenda. But proposals that move in a socialist direction by democratizing the decision-making powers now held by corporations are very relevant.

II

The present crisis is not one more cyclic down in the "normal" capitalist pattern of boom and bust (which the liberalism of the '60s thought it had abolished). When this crisis is resolved, for good or bad, the auto and steel industries will not return to their old ways as they did after the recessions of 1954–55 and 1959–60. They, as other major departments of the economy, will be basically changed. As in the 1890s and the 1930s, there will have to be a fundamental restructuring of the system—within the system.

The reason is that the evolution of late-capitalist society has subverted the effectiveness of some of the theories and practices of the second stage of the welfare state. Since this has happened in every advanced Western nation and in Japan, one can speak of a crisis of late capitalism itself; but this crisis also takes a peculiarly American, and therefore exceptional, form in this country. It is impossible for me, or anyone else, to elaborate a finished account of why these things have happened. As the conservative economist Herbert Stein has acknowledged, the Keynesian "textbook," which provided the policy framework for a generation, is now obsolete. Therefore I will briefly sketch what I take to be some of the important factors in this development.

The second stage of the welfare state was based on a mixed economy in which, however, basic economic decisions were still made in corporate boardrooms. To be sure, the government intervened, primarily by means of fiscal and monetary policy, in order to assure a proper mix of buying power and investment and thereby to guarantee full employment and price stability. However, and this was particularly true in the United States, the private sector remained in charge of the allocation of most resources—an arrangement the state was supposed to facilitate, not challenge. The growth dividend yielded by this approach was then employed to provide a minimal (in the United States, often subminimal) living standard for those who could not participate in the private labor market (the very young, the aging, the severely handicapped). More recently, legislation also proposed that corporations in-

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ternalize some of the most outrageous social costs they had been imposing upon the earth, air, water—and people.

THIS SYSTEM doesn't work any more. Why?

In fiscal policy, the "trade-off" between unemployment and prices no longer operates or, more precisely, does so at intolerable costs: it takes a deep recession to reduce prices even temporarily. For a generation it had been assumed, with considerable evidence, that prices and joblessness formed a kind of seesaw. Under those circumstances, a "tight" fiscal policy—reducing the federal deficit, or even creating a surplus by budgetary restraint and cuts—would slow the economy, result in layoffs, and thus contract demand in the marketplace. This would lead corporations to lower prices in the hope of maintaining profits through increased volume. Conversely, stepped-up federal spending would inflate demand, business would hire workers and employ unused capacity in order to take advantage of new opportunities.

In the recession of 1969–70, unemployment rose but prices did not fall at the expected rate; in the OPEC-induced crisis of 1974–75, joblessness and prices rose together. This was not, as the Reagan Council of Economic Advisers argued in its 1982 report, caused by excessive government intervention. If that were so, why had it taken a full quarter of a century for this effect to assert itself? "Stagflation"—*simultaneous* high prices and unemployment—is a new phenomenon, and it reflects changes in the very structure of late capitalism. One factor certainly is the increased control corporations can exert over prices—which subverts the very market mechanism that is supposed to transmit the signals of fiscal policy.

What Sir John Hicks, Britain's first Nobel laureate in economics, calls a "fixprice" market is a major factor in the United States, particularly in manufacture, communications, and transportation. "Fixprice" markets are, as *Business Week* stated when it summarized Hicks's view,

> . . . largely insulated from the forces of supply and demand. Companies set prices in these markets to reflect their production costs. Prices tend to change slowly, whether up or down. And they go lower and stay lower only if production costs do the same.

There are, let it be frankly said, furious scholarly debates over the degree of monopoly and oligopoly in the American economy. However, a careful survey of the data, Edward S. Herman's *Corporate Control, Corporate Power,* concluded in 1981 that "price competition has diminished in the process of growth and maturation" in this country. And this trend has probably been aggravated by the epidemic of corporate mergers in the late 1970s and early '80s. In 1981, $82.6 billion was spent in corporate take-overs. These enormous outlays created no new jobs and did not increase productivity, yet they were $11 billion higher than the productive expenditures in the same year for nonresidential fixed business investment. The mergers further increased the concentration of the American economy—and thereby further weakened the capacity of the traditional Keynesian fiscal remedies.

There is a second trend that sometimes even countervails the one we have just described: *the internationalization of American capitalism.* Between 1970 and 1980 the portion of American goods production that was exported rose from 9 percent to 17 percent; the imported share of sales in this country went from 9 percent to 21 percent. And by 1979, American corporate investment overseas reached almost 10 percent of total investment. One result was that the automobile industry, the very model of an oligopoly sector, now faced foreign competition (including competition from American companies producing overseas). In the halcyon days of 1945–70 the car manufacturers, choosing to ignore the UAW's advice, profiteered off increasingly inefficient and expensive autos, while conceding the market in small, fuel-efficient vehicles to the Japanese and West Germans. Then a combination of energy crisis and growing internationalization of the capitalist market made this policy a prescription for disaster. *Business Week* generalized the problem:

> Bred during a century of economic predominance based on the exploitation of an internal frontier, American attitudes are not suited to a

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world economy that has become increasingly integrated . . . where much of U.S. technology has migrated abroad and where energy independence is rapidly becoming a wistful memory."

Under these conditions, the "private" decisions of auto and steel makers had the public consequence, not simply of causing unemployment and injuring entire regions of the United States, but of making obsolete the established economic policy, which had been designed for a relatively closed, national economy.

That same internationalizing process is also one of the reasons why monetary policy is in disarray. In theory, control of the money supply by the Federal Reserve works in much the same way as fiscal policy: "easy" money facilitates expansion, "tight" money controls prices. But with a huge Eurodollar market and multinationals using satellite communications to shift funds around the globe with dazzling speed in order to take advantage of shifts in the value of national currencies, the Fed faces problems it has never before encountered. Indeed, the 1979 decision to let interest rates soar —which was supposed to reduce inflation— was made in response to international pressures. More recently, European governments have been profoundly disturbed by the fact that money is taken out of productive uses in their domestic economy and sent to the United States for risk-free high rates of return in the money market. At the same time, American banks have been busy creating new kinds of money—checking accounts with interest, certificates of deposit that authorize withdrawals —and brokerage houses have, in effect, been going into the banking business.

These and other forces contributed to the great mystery of 1982: why, in the first quarter of that year with the economy in decline and the money supply on the rise, did real (inflation discounted) interest rates remain at the highest level since the Great Depression? Part of the answer is that corporations have become much more addicted to debt—and short-term debt in particular—than ever before. Business people preach sobriety and abstemiousness to the federal government. Yet between 1950 and 1980 the debt of all levels of government (state and local as well as federal) went up by 340 percent, while private borrowing soared by 1,642 percent! In part this was a legacy of the inflated 1970s, with corporations borrowing in short-term markets and assuming they could pay off in depreciated dollars. In part it was a consequence of the merger mania. "Two years of wild corporate acquisitions," *Business Week* commented in 1982, "mainly financed by short-term borrowing, have pushed corporate debt to more than half a trillion dollars."

So internal as well as international changes in the very structure of the money system turned monetary policy from a tool of government planning into a dangerous mystery. At the same time, *sectoral—often very "American"—causes worked to further destabilize the system.*

The internationalization of American capitalism was most dramatically evident in an area that many people think of as almost precapitalist: agriculture. In the American imagination, that sector is populated mainly by old-fashioned family farmers. In fact it is dominated by corporations controlling the inputs (farm machinery, bank credit, and so on) and corporations controlling the outputs (processors, packagers, exporters). In 1977 the farmers received a little less than 8 percent of the total market value of their crops; agribusiness took 92 percent. In the 1970s Communist agricultural failure in such countries as the Soviet Union and Poland led to enormous increases in U.S. food exports: they jumped from $9.4 billion in 1972 to $17.7 billion in 1973 (the year of the first big Soviet grain deal) to $41.2 billion in 1980. But in 1981 huge crops and the embargo of exports to Poland (second only to the Soviet Union as a customer) depressed prices. In a matter of months, the estimated cost of farm supports, including multibillion-dollar subsidies to nonproduction, jumped by $5 billion. At the same time, farmers, heavily dependent on borrowing, were devastated by soaring interest rates. There followed an agricultural depression.

Food and energy account for about one-third of the Consumer Price Index. So when oil costs went down—in part because of a more efficient use of fuel, in greater part because an economy in recession uses less energy—that too helped

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moderate the inflation rate. In both cases the good news (price increases slow down) was purchased at the cost of bad news (agricultural depression, industrial recession). There was little compensation for the bad news in two other sectors: housing became a disaster area because anti-inflation tight money policies inflated the financing cost of a home and sent mortgage rates through the roof; and medical costs have continued to rise even when other costs have fallen. The fact that America is the only advanced capitalist society without a national health system means that our medical structures are not simply more unjust but also more expensive than those in the rest of the capitalist world.

One other factor—*technological change*—has only begun to have an impact on the American economy but it, too, promises to bring deep-going changes that will render the policy patterns of the past half-century obsolete. In March 1982, *Business Week* ran a cover story on the "second computer revolution" resulting from the development of "artificial intelligence." It took seriously one estimate that manufacturing jobs would, over the next 30 years, decline by more than 80 percent (from between 25 and 28 million to 3 million). The slack will not be taken up, this analysis continued, by jobs in the service and white-collar industries—for they, too, face technological extinction at a great rate. The German metal workers' union came to similar conclusions, calculating that 45 percent to 55 percent of the jobs in West Germany would be affected by electronics.

Perhaps the high water mark of Keynesian self-confidence in the '60s is to be found in the report of the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress. All that is needed to deal with new technology, the Commission said, was the proper manipulation of total demand. That would lead to full employment and though there might be problems for particular groups of workers, stimulative economic policy would take care of the main problem. Only now do we see sweeping technological change threaten at precisely the time when the policy tools of which the Commission was so sure no longer work.

This situation reminds one that, for all the tremendous changes that have taken place in capitalism over the past century or so, some of its classic mechanisms remain intact. An economic crisis is bad from a corporate point of view: it reduces profits, drives out the more vulnerable companies, and so forth. But the crisis also has a positive function from that same corporate point of view: it not only permits, but forces, restructuring, the closing of the least efficient units, investments in new technologies. In that sense, the technological element in the current situation is a classic repetition of an old pattern. But it takes place in an utterly new environment and forms a further destabilizing factor.

In this very brief survey of some basic causes of the present crisis, every case involves structural change that invalidates the conventional theory and practice of the last 50 or so years. Corporate concentration and conglomeration further attenuate the influence of markets and undercut fiscal policies that assumed those markets would send the proper signals; increased internationalization of the American economy makes private and public plans based on national assumptions obsolete; the debt addiction of corporations and the ingenuity of banks at creating money turns monetarism, which was always dubious, into an ineffectual program for controlling a mystery; particular sectors—agriculture, energy, health, housing—have their special impact. And in this threatening context there is the prospect of a new technological revolution.

III

By 1982 every political tendency in the United States realized that the nation was in a radical crisis requiring new policy departures. The Carter administration was the last gasp of the conventional wisdom, oscillating between moderate and reactionary Keynesian tactics; and this is one reason for its defeat. In the aftermath of that event, four main economic philosophies have been competing to become the new wisdom of the '80s. All of them, including Ronald Reagan's, assume a degree of national economic planning. They differ on what plan to implement and how.

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Two of these policy options—Reagan's and the one urged by the "neoliberals" in the Democratic party—share a faith in the ability of financial markets to allocate capital to uses that are both privately and socially useful. Both outlooks involve a sort of *dirigiste laissez-faire*—the use of government power to impose broad limits of choice upon markets that are then allowed to make the actual investment decisions. The other two options—Felix Rohatyn's and the one advocated in this essay—favor planned investments, but they differ profoundly as to how this should be done.

The Reagan program has been exhaustively criticized from the left and all that is needed here is to summarize a persuasive indictment. The basic Reagan strategy was succinctly stated by the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA): "The Administration seeks to increase capital formation by both raising the level of output and reducing the fraction of output consumed." The choice here is that investment must be favored as against consumption, above all, as against the "nonproductive" consumption that is social spending. To do this, the Reagan CEA continues, it is necessary "to lower the household consumption rate," that is, to impose the governmental will upon the "sovereign" consumers of free-enterprise theory. This is done by changing after-tax wage rates and the after-tax return on capital. Once that is done, the Reaganites say, the households will "freely" make the decisions the planners want.

This is the basic rationale for all of Reagan's reactionary policies. It is supported by three demonstrably false propositions:

• GOVERNMENT SPENDING in the United States, by taking away from investment and subsidizing consumption, is the cause of declining investment and productivity.

But the problem is that the United States already has the cheapest welfare state in the advanced world; if social meanness were the key to economic success this country should by now be far ahead of Japan and West Germany. In 1977 Japan spent 17 percent of GNP on social welfare (not counting the very large welfare expenditure of corporations), West Germany spent 30.6 percent, and the United States 14.2 percent. Throughout the entire postwar period, the average U.S. outlays on welfare were about 60 percent of those of the other Western societies (excluding Japan, but including Australia and New Zealand). These patterns, John Stephens has demonstrated, are primarily the result of the low level of trade-union organization and the absence of a labor or socialist party in this country.

• BUDGET DEFICITS, which are the result of that "prodigal" but actually nonexistent welfare spending, are identified as another source of our troubles.

In fact, as the Congressional Budget Office documented in a careful survey of the literature in early 1982, big deficits have been associated with *lower* interest rates in the postwar period because these deficits are induced by recessions that, until the present crisis, have reduced the demand for money. Indeed, Ronald Reagan is himself a perfect refutation of his own thesis that deficits cause economic crisis. After cutting social spending, but setting off the deepest recession since the 1930s, his prospective deficit rose to record levels. The "uncontrollable" element in the current situation is not, as Reagan argues, government spending, but an economy out of control that imposes expenditures—like that extra $5 billion in farm subsidies—on conservatives and liberals alike.

• INVESTMENT, Reagan's third argument goes, has been starved by those deficits and all that social spending.

Here again the facts do not conform. In the "golden age" of 1965–69, nonresidential fixed investment was 10.5 percent of GNP, but in 1979 and 1980 it was 10.7 percent. Moreover, as we have seen, there was more money available for corporate take-overs in 1981 than new money for nonresidential fixed investment. This points to a critical truth, one that subverts both Reaganite and neo-liberal theories: it is not the *supply* of capital that is problematic, but the *use* made of it. Take two dramatic examples: between 1970 and 1980, the number of commodity future contracts (a publicly sanctioned form of gambling) rose by 450

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percent; U.S. companies spend over $10 billion a year in lawsuits among themselves, much more than in any other Western economy. An America in which interest payments are now a higher percentage of national income than profits is awash with money being used to "rearrange" assets rather than to produce goods and services.

THE THREE PILLARS of Reaganomic theory are, in short, constructed out of sand. That, however, has not prevented them from having a devastating effect on the real world.

The social spending cuts of 1981 were primarily aimed at the working poor who get CETA jobs, Food Stamps, Medicaid. In the 1982 budget battles, the inevitable consequences of a mad logic began to assert themselves. In wrongly seeking to control deficits that are the effect, rather than the cause, of the economic crisis, Washington discovered that it had to attack programs for the aging. Roughly two-thirds of federal domestic spending goes to people over 65 years of age; half of Washington's budget is allocated to "payments to individuals," most of that money once again going to the aging. Given this reality, Peter Peterson, the secretary of commerce under Gerald Ford, pointed out in 1982 that it is impossible to balance the budget simply by attacking the poor: ". . . we would run out of unworthy poor people long before balancing the budget," he wrote. Therefore, Social Security has to be cut.

Since Social Security, for all its flaws, is one of the most popular programs in the country, the attack on it must be carried out discreetly. It will probably be done by using one of the favored antisocial weapons of these times: statistics. By redefining the Consumer Price Index—and by scrupulously ignoring the way in which it underestimates the costs borne by the aging—the government can lower the real income of people over 65 and reverse the trend of the 1960s in which the poverty of that group was cut in half. In addition to being cruel, these cuts will have no significant impact on the current crisis since they attack symptoms, not causes.

While Reagan was thus taking Food Stamps away from the working poor and trying to figure out a tactic for the attack on the aging, his tax cuts were giving enormous benefits to the very rich. As the Congressional Budget Office computed the consequences of the president's 1981 proposals:

Share of Total Tax Savings by Income Class

Expanded Income Class	*Share of Total Returns* %	*Share of Tax Savings* %
$0-10,000	36.6	3.3
10-20,000	25.9	8.7
20-30,000	18.1	21.1
30-50,000	14.6	31.0
50-100,000	3.9	18.0
100,000 and over	0.9	17.9

Source: Table 8 in "Analysis of President Reagan's Budget Revisions for Fiscal Year 1982," Congressional Budget Office, March 1981.

This reactionary redistribution of income dramatically deviates from the accepted norm (observed mainly in the breach): that taxes should be based on ability to pay. It is justified on the grounds that it will give the corporate rich the funds to invest in jobs and productivity that will benefit the entire society. But apart from being outrageously antiegalitarian, this strategy is also unworkable. For one thing, as the conservative London *Economist* has documented, this subsidy affects different industries in different ways: the cost of capital declines 14 percent for communications but less than 9 percent for electrical industries. In some industries, the tax breaks are so lucrative that nonprofitable investments become rational—which is to say, the losses are assumed by the taxpayers. "Years of experience with similar tax deals in Britain," the *Economist* said, "make most Europeans rather dubious." Right after the law passed, Thomas Graham of Jones & Laughlin Steel told the *New York Times*: "What we need is an international pause in adding steelmaking capacity. There's too much

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capacity in the free world." The chairman of U.S. Steel was even more explicit: he demanded still further tax reductions for the companies before they would begin to invest.

The third strand in the Reagan policy is tight-money policy to control inflation. That, as we have seen, is a prescription for the manipulation of an unknown, a fact highlighted by the recent erratic trends in the money supply. Between October 1979 and February 1980, the money supply rose by 7.7 percent, then dropped by 7.9 percent in the next quarter, increased by 11.9 percent in the following year, then fell by 0.3 percent during the next two months, and went up by 12 percent in the two months after that. But if this policy did, for some reason, work, then the tight money would likely cancel out the effect of the tax stimulus and slow down, or even abort, the recovery.

Finally, President Reagan has proposed huge increases in military spending. I am against these, primarily on noneconomic grounds: they threaten existence on the planet and, by destabilizing an already unstable balance of terror, dramatically *decrease* the national security of the United States. Even if such outlays were enormously beneficial on economic grounds I would oppose them. In fact, however, the five-year increase of $1.5 trillion in military spending is the worst kind of economic investment America can make. Military spending creates high-technology employment for skilled people already in short supply, thus having an inflationary effect on the labor market; but it creates very few jobs for minorities, youth, and laid-off workers in the Northeast and Midwest.

So Reagan's policies are based on a fundamentally flawed analysis; are socially cruel and reactionary; are self-contradictory and will not work.

The neoliberals—I have in mind Senators Paul Tsongas and Gary Hart in particular—share some of Reagan's assumptions, yet they are economic as well as social critics of other aspects of his program. They are young, sound, innovative, and have placed themselves strategically between the "extremes" of Reaganism and '60s liberalism. They have, I fear, a very real political future.

"In the past," Hart wrote in a memorandum in February 1982, "we have tried to solve our economic problems with more federal spending, or more federal regulation, or more federal bureaucracies." That is straight conservative doctrine and, as we have seen in the discussion of the American welfare state, largely untrue. Tsongas mines a similar vein. In *The Road From Here* he writes that

> . . . if we maximize "justice" we destroy the conditions for economic growth. In more specific terms, if you maximize all your "just" social programs, the costs would be so burdensome as to cripple the economy, leading to sharply reduced governmental revenues and the collapse of these very programs as a result.

This may sound like conservatism pure and simple, but it isn't. For it is articulated within a framework of authentically liberal values. Indeed, Tsongas sometimes makes implicit criticisms of his own basic position. He notes, for example, that West Germany, far more economically successful than the United States in recent years, spends a higher percentage of its GNP on government than does this country, and he attacks the class bias of Reagan's programs. Hart, to be fair, says of "supply-side" economics: "In practice, it brings high interest rates, massive deficits and depression levels of unemployment." Moreover, Hart is an opponent of the military's obsession with oversophisticated technology and Tsongas explicitly defends gay rights.

But why, then, group these neoliberals next to Ronald Reagan? Because their central point, their controlling assumption, is conservative; their liberalism is genuine but irrelevant; Hart and Tsongas are convinced that America's basic problem stems from overconsumption and underinvestment. Each therefore explores ways to reward investment and restrict consumption. But since investment in this society is controlled, not by the poor, the workers, or even the middle class, but by the corporate rich, such a strategy—however well-intentioned and carefully qualified with liberal details—is a scheme for the public subsidy of the corporate rich. It asserts, like Reagan, that the fundamental problem in the present crisis is the *supply* of capital rather than, as is actually

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the case, the systematic *misuse* of existing capital, to which the private sector devotes so much energy and ingenuity.

Thus Tsongas criticizes the Kemp-Roth tax proposal of 1981 as inflationary, but defends the notion of massive subsidies to capital. In a somewhat more populist mood, he advocates tax-deferred accounts for everyone. That is an interesting proposition in the light of the experience with the "All Savers" accounts (which took place after Tsongas's book was published but casts a great deal of light on his proposals). In that scheme, the interest of up to $1,000 for an individual or of $2,000 for a couple filing joint returns was made tax-exempt in order to induce savers to lend to banks at a rate substantially below market levels. In theory this was supposed to provide a pool of money for mortgages. In practice, the "All Savers" favored those people who had slightly more than $15,000 to invest and who had incomes of more than $30,000 a year (the higher your income, the better the deal). It caused many in that privileged group to switch funds out of other forms of savings—adding little or nothing to the sum total of capital. There is no evidence that it had any impact on housing.

The point is not to blame Tsongas for the failings of an "All Savers" program that postdated his book, but to suggest that the problems writ so large in the case of "All Savers" are inherent in the approach he advocates. Any scheme that (wrongly) seeks to expand the supply of capital by preferred treatment of investment income must, even when accompanied by a populist rhetoric, subsidize those with most capital. And, as we have seen, an increased supply of capital can facilitate speculation rather than real investment. To be sure, Tsongas bows in the direction of that problem. He wants the tax-deferred savings to go into "productive endeavors" and even wants a temporary Reconstruction Finance Corporation to do some very limited planning—but that is all.

Gary Hart does not even make that bow. In somewhat oblique language, he comes out against the RFC approach, denouncing government subsidies to "sunrise" industries (and a policy of allowing "sunset" sectors to die). His central proposal is to switch from an income tax to a consumption tax in order to maximize saving and investment (which would not be taxed). This idea, *Business Week* reports, came out of a Treasury report prepared for William E. Simon, one of the most vigorous supporters of largesse for the corporations. But even if one did not know that interesting fact, it is clear that Hart's proposal is a classic case of *dirigiste laissez-faire* politics: having the government rig markets in favor of "free enterprise." In the abstract, it is possible to design a progressive consumption tax (by exempting the basic expenditures of the majority and putting a high levy on the luxury expenditures of the rich). But this would require, as Richard Goode has shown, even more progressive rates than in the case of an income tax.

However, let's leave the scholarly argument over the consumption tax aside (and there are, it should be noted, two sides to it). Politically, when a major shift is made in the tax system in order to maximize investment, there is no way to impose steeper rates on the rich, if only because that undercuts the very rationale for the whole undertaking. What is wrong with Hart's proposal is not some hypothetical possibility that can be debated by scholars; it is the fundamental assumption about the need for more capital and the profound faith, so contrary to the actual experience of recent years, that an expanded supply of investment funds will automatically be allocated to economically productive, socially useful purposes.

Neoliberalism, then, surely is better than Reaganism in that it is more compassionate and even sensitive to equity considerations about the distribution of income. Politically it might be called Reaganism with a (somewhat) human face. Felix Rohatyn presents an even more complex phenomenon: a sort of "social democracy with a corporate face."

Rohatyn is for a planned, technocratic reindustrialization of America by means of a coalition of government, business, and labor that will guarantee—in theory, though only in theory—equality of sacrifice on the part of all the participants. He sees the resolution of the New York City crisis—in which he played a central role as an architect of the Municipal Assis-

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tance Corporation (MAC) and the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB)—as a model for what has to be done in the nation. His chosen instrument for this program is a new Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) that will act as a federal investment banker, putting money into "sunrise" industries, creating a new economic base for the Northeast, and dealing with a host of other problems.

The original RFC, created by Herbert Hoover, was a descendant of World War I government intervention into the economy when the War Finance Committee planned and funded industrial expansion, and the railroads, telephone, and telegraph companies were temporarily nationalized. After the war that experience was generalized as big business—most notably John D. Rockefeller, Jr.—came out for "industrial democracy" with a system of tripartite governance. This "mock syndicalism," James Gilbert has noted, was actually designed to thwart the unions, giving a semblance of worker control in order to avoid the reality.

Hoover picked up this idea in 1932, and Roosevelt ran with it in 1933. It was—and here the notion of "social democracy with a corporate face" emerges—supported both by the extreme right wing of the New Deal, including Jesse James who administered the program, and by the plan-oriented left wing (people like Adolf Berle). When Rohatyn originally came up with the idea of reviving the RFC in a *New York Times* article in 1974, he was primarily concerned with a way of helping corporations deal with their new debt addiction. Adolf Berle had told the president of the Federal Reserve Bank and some businesspeople in May 1970 that the debt problem in the private sector was such that "they had better organize an RFC and be quick about it. . . ."

BUT THEN CAME the 1975 New York City fiscal crisis, with Rohatyn playing a prominent role, followed by the growing awareness of the national crisis of stagflation. At this point Rohatyn's RFC ceased to be mainly a welfare program for corporate debtors and became the institution that would plan the country out of its economic predicament. But this planning (the "social democratic" component) is to be done in elite fashion (the "corporate" face). Felix Rohatyn is rather frank about his elitism. Part of the problem, he argues, is that there is too much democracy and the minority no longer respects the decisions of the majority (which is very close to the Trilateral Commission thesis that the West is suffering from democratic "overload"). Indeed, what is needed is an "RFC that is publicly accountable but is run outside of politics, like MAC in New York State, [and] could provide . . . capital as well as negotiate the stringent concessions that have to come with it. That is beyond the capacity of any Congressional Committee." In a 1976 speech, Rohatyn made it clear that his RFC would force governors to make certain political decisions in order to get infusions of capital. "What we are creating," he said, "is a way to give politicians an excuse to do what they know ought to be done anyway." Put more cynically and in the words of a Washington wit, the RFC is "Felix Rohatyn with a 100-billion-dollar check."

Rohatyn's habit of analogizing the present national crisis with New York City's fiscal crisis of 1975–76 provides us with a fairly clear example of what he has in mind for the country. What New Yorkers were forced to accept, he holds, was "a period of austerity." That meant a wage freeze, a 20 percent reduction in the municipal work force, increased transit fares, tuition at the City University, a shift of pension costs from the city to the unions, and new taxes. There is one other item in this list of sacrifices and it is worth closer examination. There was, Rohatyn says, "reduction by the banks of interest rates paid by the city and extension of the time period of the city's loans . . . ." This is an essential point, necessary to preserve the symmetry of sacrifice. In New York in the past, in America in the future, *everyone* must suffer, the rich and poor alike.

The bankers, in fact, prospered rather than suffered. When the New York City crisis broke, there were questions as to whether they should be indicted for criminal responsibility in the breakdown. The banks had profited enormously from selling municipal paper and they well might have begun to dump it on the basis of insider information about the emerging cri-

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sis. At a minimum, they were guilty of incredible naiveté—William Simon, the most unctuous of capitalists, has said that the bankers, including himself, never questioned the "underlying fiscal conditions of New York" when they were giving official financial advice to New York. Indeed, the Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of the mess contained assertions that might have caught the eye of a public prosecutor.

Even more to the point, Ken Auletta has documented how the banks actually improved their position during the city's crisis. They avoided prosecution (which even the *Wall Street Journal* understood was one of their purposes), increased the assets of the largest banks by 23.5 percent while *lowering* their municipal securities to 3.4 percent and municipal paper to less than 1 percent of their assets. And the very same banks that avoided helping the city that housed them were willing to make much riskier investments in the Third World!

In his more candid moods Rohatyn recognizes that there really was no equality of sacrifice in New York City. "It is disingenuous to pretend that the Administration's program will protect the needy and will spread sacrifice evenly," he told a congressional committee in March 1981. "When government cutbacks occur, the needy always get hurt.... This result is unfair, but it is to some degree inevitable and its consequences must be faced." This fits into Rohatyn's "Japanese" insistence that Washington must plan, by means of wage freezes as well as government funds, to solve the present crisis.

All this can sound "social democratic," which is why some unions have been attracted to Rohatyn's approach. And it is, of course, much more realistic than either Reaganomics or neoliberalism: it has the virtue—but also the vice—of being workable. Indeed, it could well be supported by the more sophisticated, foreign-trade oriented sector of capital, which understands that it must compete with state planning in every other advanced capitalist society and might want to emulate it at home. This provides the business clientele for "social democracy with a corporate face."

The final option for America as it moves toward the third stage of the welfare state is social democracy with a social democratic face. That is what I wish to propose.

IV

Rohatyn helps in defining what that third stage of the welfare state should be. He said of the New York City crisis, as we have just seen, that "when government cutbacks occur, the needy always get hurt.... This result is unfair but it is to some degree inevitable...."

Why "inevitable"? Let me theorize Rohatyn's accurate empirical statement. When corporations, and the corporate rich, are in charge of the critical investment decisions that determine the economic course of the society, they are, by that fact, more important than anyone else, including a democratic majority. Their prosperity is the key to the nation's prosperity, the source of investment funds; their decisions as to technology and plant location and pricing shape the future. Under such circumstances—whether by intervening through a *dirigiste laissez-faire* policy, as in Reaganomics and neoliberalism, or by building corporate priorities into a planning structure, as with Rohatyn—government will *inevitably* discriminate in favor of the elite controlling basic allocations and choices.

Both the first and second stages of the welfare state assumed that it was good and proper for corporations to dominate the economy. That power, it was argued, would be offset and tamed by liberals dominating the government. In the brief, first stage of the welfare state, the contradictory potential of this arrangement was hardly apparent since people were grateful for any relief from the worst collapse in the history of capitalism. In the second stage, the contradictions did not assert themselves dramatically, although they did work to make the very corporate rich who had opposed the welfare state into the chief beneficiaries of government intervention. The contradictions were softened because that period, 1945–70, was a time of secular boom, living standards were indeed rising, and it was possible to finance a modest measure of social justice out of a growth dividend.

But, since 1970, the contradictions of the

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private sector have become impossible to ignore and the systemic flaws of standard liberal theory have helped to discredit liberalism and make a reactionary conservatism seem plausible. And as long as that basic structure of corporate dominance goes unchallenged, the crisis will, as Rohatyn recognized, be resolved at the expense of the poor, the working people, and even the middle class. Inevitably. Therefore the third stage of the welfare state must at least begin to transform the basic structures, which not merely undercut minimal social decency but also are a major source of economic crisis.

The central thrust of a progressive third stage of the welfare state must, then, be the democratization of the corporate power over basic economic allocations and decisions. I call this "social democracy"—and not socialism—because, in realistic political terms, it envisions a structural reform of late capitalism, not society's basic transformation. And so, throughout the foreseeable future, there will be private corporations with considerable economic power. How, within that constraining framework, can one at least begin to control that elite power? In what follows, I shall try to answer that question by means of significant examples. I will, for instance, be relatively brief in talking of social policy, not because it is unimportant, but because I believe that the restructuring of the economy is the precondition for progress in this era.

Full Employment

THERE MUST BE a planned, federal creation of entire new industries to provide jobs for Americans, putting them to work satisfying real needs and, wherever possible, also eliminating sources of inflation. A national commitment to renewable-source energy systems, built on a human scale and capable of being used in the Third World as well as in the United States, could meet these criteria. The construction of a new rail system is another case in point. There is remarkable corroboration of the realism and the soundness of this idea, coming both from Republican and Democratic members of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC). The JEC, to be sure, will probably be appalled by the way in which I modify their scheme for a tripartite effort of business, labor, and government by calling instead for democratically structured, publicly owned corporations. But that does not change our agreement on the conditions that demand a new railroad industry in the United States.

One of the most radical economic, social, and political decisions ever made in this country was taken during the Administration of Dwight Eisenhower: the Federal Highway program. It was rationalized in the name of "national defense"—but then, so was everything in those days; yet it had an enormous impact upon domestic, civilian America. As Felix Rohatyn concedes on occasion, there were national investment policies that encouraged the migration of jobs from the Northeast to the Sunbelt without taking into account, or planning for, the consequences. This was one of them. It also was a key element in the effective—but also unplanned—decision to destroy mass transit in America by providing huge subsidies for private passenger automobiles and for the trucking industry.

Now the JEC has told us in November 1981 that massive investment has become impossibly expensive to maintain:

> The U.S. Highway System is rapidly deteriorating. According to the Federal Highway Administration, the federal government must expend $360 billion [in 1980 dollars] over the next 15 years just to maintain and repair the existing far-from-adequate road quality of the 847,000 mile federally aided highway system. . . . Other major forms of domestic transportation are also experiencing difficulties. The Nation's major airports and primary air lanes are congested. . . . Even though major population centers receive adequate air service, many smaller communities are losing service as a result of airline deregulation and the increasing cost of providing service.

And the railroads? The JEC details the many things that are wrong with them but one statistic might stand as a paradigm for all the other problems: "The average speed of passenger trains in the United States has declined

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from 70 miles per hour in the mid-1950s to a current average of 40 miles per hour." Meanwhile, the JEC reports, the British, French, and Japanese have been developing extremely efficient high-speed trains that are competitive with airplanes at intermediate distances. Indeed, the committee then goes on to identify 20 areas in this country in which such a technology would be economically feasible.

Here is a key passage in which the JEC states the basic conclusion of this analysis:

> The development of a high-speed passenger rail system in the United States would have benefits that extend far beyond saving energy and improving personal transportation. *Revitalizing the Nation's passenger railroads would provide an excellent start in reindustrializing America because it would require the creation of a major industry.* [Emphasis in the original.]

The JEC then argues that the development of this industry should be the joint task of business, labor, and government. But why involve the very industry that helped to destroy the rail system? Particularly when it is clear that the taxpayers would have to provide the "risk capital" for the undertaking. What is needed, I would suggest, are a number of democratically structured regional rail corporations with community and labor participation as well as input from working management and government.

The main point I want to make here is not about the structure of a new rail industry, important as it is. It is that the membership of the JEC, including its Republicans, understands that the conscious and planned creation of an entire new industry is necessary both to meet national needs and to create jobs.

Second, I believe, as a socialist, that corporations should receive subsidies as part of a plan for rebuilding America.

I put the issue paradoxically to stress the practical importance of a generalization made earlier: that corporate America is going to be around for the foreseeable future and certainly during the next stage of the welfare state. The key strategy here, I believe, is to make any subsidies to corporations dependent upon their conforming to a democratically determined economic plan. Not one cent of subsidy money —not even a tax deduction for the cost of moving—to a company that moves out of a community without giving advance notice, defending its actions in terms of social costs as well as private benefits, and agreeing to pay for those social costs by helping to create new, alternative jobs for those made unemployed by that decision. But where a corporation moves into a community in distress and starts hiring, generous public subsidies.

The major emphasis in the program that is developed here is upon rebuilding America. But, as the Brandt Commission on North-South demonstrated (to the satisfaction of the London *Economist* as well as of the Socialist International), a Western commitment to the modernization of the Third World could generate jobs in the First World while meeting the capital needs of the globe's poor.

Inflation

HOW COULD such things be done without rekindling the fires of inflation? The two planned social investments just proposed—for alternate energy and a new rail system—would both reduce the inflationary component of the present energy and transportation system. Each of these investments would also promote environmental protection while simultaneously creating jobs. To the degree that such policies would reduce unemployment, they would cut that $30 billion federal deficit cost of each percentage point of joblessness. There can also be specific programs aimed at sectoral sources of both inflation and unemployment. Credit allocation is a critical measure in this context; so is national health.

In the recent past, enormous sums of borrowed money have been available—despite all the talk about "crowding out"—for corporate take-overs that do not create jobs or increase productivity. There has also been money for speculation. The DuPont–Conoco and U.S. Steel–Marathon deals are only the most obvious recent cases. At the same time, many Americans were unable to get mortgages because of sky-high interest rates and had trouble financing cars for the same reason. It was not

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just those priced out of the market who were hurt; the building-trades people who would have built the houses and the auto workers who would have constructed those cars suffered unemployment as a result.

But why does government policy treat speculative borrowers in the same way as—in reality better than—consumers who want to buy the necessities of the present living standard and thereby can help provide employment to auto and construction workers? That is not only unfair, it is uneconomic since it diverts resources to nonproductive uses. Therefore, credit allocation should be part of an anti-inflationary program, seeing to it that funds are channeled to genuinely productive, socially valuable uses. There is ample precedent for this approach. Until the banking system went into orbit in the 1970s, creating so many new forms of (usually upper-class) money that the Federal Reserve Bank no longer can really define the money supply, savings-and-loans were allowed to give interest rates slightly higher than commercial banks in order to ensure that there would be a supply of mortgage credit. And "Fanny Mae"—the Federal National Mortgage Association, a spin-off from the old RFC—also worked to the same effect.

Clearly, the legal authority and precedent for credit allocation are in place. But for this system to work as well as it should, one of the great autocratic principalities of the American political structure has to be challenged: the Federal Reserve Bank. The chair of the Fed is perhaps the second most important economic policy-maker in the United States, ranking just after the president. Yet he is appointed for a term of 7 years and operates in a powerful institution run completely by bankers. Can one imagine the howls of consternation from the right if the National Labor Relations Board were staffed totally by trade unionists with terms of office allowing them to outlast elected presidents with whom they disagreed? Clearly, the Fed should be subjected to democratic controls with the term of the chair to expire at the same time as that of the president who appoints him, and the governing board should be broadened to include representatives of the unions and the consumers.

By thus moving to get control of the speculative uses of money and interest and thereby channeling real resources to economically and socially useful investment, another inflationary factor could be brought under control. But all of these measures would not suffice. For there must be standby authority for the imposition of—note the precise way the thought is formulated—price, executive compensation, rent, and wage controls. Controls in and of themselves are not good or bad, inflationary or deflationary. Controls administered by Richard Nixon's appointees with a mandate to "zap" labor were reactionary. Controls that genuinely seek to contain *all* prices, incomes, rents, and, where required, wages, in any form, and that are administered openly and democratically can be helpful in the fight against inflation.

But it should also be remembered that one of the conservative criticisms of controls has merit. Over time the efficacy of the best system of controls will decline. There are many ways to evade them, and business is willing to invest a tremendous amount of time and money in order to learn the ways. Therefore, controls—and plant closing legislation—are a valuable technique for buying time, for slowing down and blunting the corporate tendency to ride roughshod over consumers and communities. If, however, that time is not used to mount an assault on the basic sources of corporate control over the economy, then immediate gains will be subverted in the long term. All the corporate books must be opened; all of the major investment decisions must be subjected to scrutiny; there must be mechanisms that prevent the stagflationist trends of corporate policy from operating in the first place. Measures to rebuild the barn door after the rustlers have fled are useful, but in a limited way.

Health is a prime case in point. Even as the inflation rate eased somewhat in 1981–82, health costs continued to soar. This is one of the sectoral sources of inflation. The American system ingeniously combines the worst of capitalism and the worst of socialism by operating fee-for-service in a health system that is financed by third-party insurers and in which no one has a stake in cost control. This is why the

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American system is not merely unjust but also the most expensive (as a percentage of GNP) in the Western world. One cannot be sanguine about the struggle for national health insurance—it has been going on for a generation, has had the support of a clear majority of the American people throughout that period, and has never even come close to serious consideration in the Congress. Yet it would be absurd to advocate an anti-inflationary program that does not make national health insurance a central component.

Financing

HOW ARE WE going to pay for all of these fine things without contributing to an inflationary spiral? That question is relatively easy to answer, not the least because, in 1981, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) provided an excellent and quite specific model of how this might be done. The CBC "alternative budget" restored all of Reagan's reactionary cuts ($27.4 billion) but increased the government's tax revenues by $27.1 billion. With some other adjustments, the CBC projected deficit for fiscal 1982 was actually $1.5 billion *less* than Reagan's figure (the latter has, of course, turned out to be an artifact fashioned by conservative fantasies). The central point is that the CBC attacked a concealed form of federal spending that has been increasing much faster than the open outlays in recent years: tax expenditures.

"Tax expenditures," Joseph Minarik of Brookings wrote, "are preferential departures from identical treatment of all types of income under either the individual or corporate income taxes." Everybody pays the maximum tax rate on their income *except* those who receive income in the form of capital gains—the latter compute their tax at a preferential rate on the capital-gains portion of their income. The CBC Alternate Budget for 1982 did not attack these handouts wholesale—though many of them are clearly biased in favor of the rich. By a judicious elimination of just a few tax expenditures, the CBC was able to show how revenue could be raised that would more than offset the cost of restoring the reactionary cuts made by Reagan and still bring in a lower projected deficit than that of the president. Here is a concrete example:

Restore:	**Collect:**
Child Nutrition Program: $1.5 billion	"Three-Martini Lunch" 50% Deduction: $1.5 billion
Food Stamps for 22 million people: $1.8 billion	Deferral of Income of Domestic, International Sales Corporations: $1.8 billion
Medicaid Payments for 22 million: $1.1 billion	End Capital Gains Treatment of Ordinary Income: $1.1 billion
Student Loans for 1 million students: $800 million	Tax Straddles: $1.3 billion
Economic Development Administration: $865 million	Foreign Tax Credits on Oil and Gas: $700 million
Alternative Energy Research and Development: $1.5 billion	Oil Depletion Allowance: $2.9 billion

Source: Congressional Black Caucus, "Alternative Budget, 1981."

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Since the CBC provided this illustration of how it would be possible to defend welfare-state gains simply by requiring the rich and corporations to pay a part—only a part—of their fair share of the tax burden, the tax expenditures have continued to increase. In the 1982 budget these hidden, but quite real, outlays total $266.7 billion. Not all of them, it should be stressed, are regressive—for instance, the loss of $2.6 billion, owing to exemptions given to the elderly and the blind is quite defensible. But what of the $31.3 billion not paid to Washington because of the deductibility of mortgage interest and interest on consumer credit?

The mortgage components are favoring owners as against renters, and owners of mansions in the upper brackets as against owners of modest houses in the middle and working class. David Stockman, to his credit, was even thinking of proposing a "mansion gap," which would have limited the amount of interest that can be deducted under this item. And the consumer credit component favors those who can run up big bills at the expense of those who pay cash or use a lesser credit card with a roof on how much can be charged.

There is an important point that should be stressed here. The most progressive way of dealing with the tax system is to make the *individual* income tax fairer. The leftist heart beats strongly when someone suggests raising the corporate income tax, but the leftist mind has to realize that "pricefix" companies simply add all, or most, of that cost to the price they charge, thus imposing the levy on the consumers.

Indeed, the ideal system would be one in which all taxes (federal, state, and local) except the federal individual income tax would be repealed, and all funds would be collected progressively through that individual income tax. Without, however, waiting for such a sweeping reform one can, as the CBC has documented, propose achievable reductions in some of the most outrageous tax expenditures and thus restore all current cuts, and even add social outlays, without increasing—indeed while decreasing—the federal deficit.

The Social Dimension

I HAVE BEEN FOCUSING on the economic dimensions of the crisis of the welfare state because I think these are the most important determinants of that crisis. But the coalition that advocates the full-employment and anti-inflation policies outlined here must also realize that there is a tremendous social dimension to this undertaking.

In general, these times of uncertainty and crisis, of fear of layoffs and stagnating or declining real income, make people a prey to the right as well as a possible source of mobilization for the left. These are times in which the paranoid element in American political life can flourish, when people, unable to come up with real solutions to real problems, turn upon imaginary villains: feminists, gays, humanists, dissidents in general. I do not want to exaggerate the appeal of the Moral Majority and similar formations (there are, after all, radical fundamentalists who find an egalitarian and compassionate message in a literal reading of the Bible). But a well organized, intolerant minority can wreak havoc in our political life, and some of the social gains of recent years could be destroyed in the process.

This raises an important problem regarding the politics of the democratic left coalition for a third stage of the welfare state. Let me be candid about it. The common denominator of a majority movement in America today, I believe, will be primarily found in economic policies that will benefit this majority. The very broad spectrum to which one can appeal on these issues is not, however, necessarily united on social issues such as women's rights, gay rights, the rights of accused defendants, and so on.

Within this variegated movement the democratic left—and particularly its socialist wing—has to make a difficult existential decision: how to push a movement in a progressive direction on these questions, but not to push it so hard that its unity is shattered and all communication becomes impossible. There is no "principled" way of defining where that balance is.

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But we—and here I speak particularly of socialists like myself—have a responsibility to state our politics openly and clearly, even if we do not demand that the broad coalition adopt them in toto. Our aim is, of course, to persuade that coalition to come to accept them. In this context, I think the coalition is, right now, ready to back Affirmative Action for women and minorities, comparable pay, equal rights, and no discrimination on the basis of a sexual preference. We favor, of course, the right of a woman to choose an abortion if that option is necessary. At this point I must simply state that I do not know whether that question would split the unity of the coalition. I am for our fighting in our own name on the issue and probing to see whether it could become the position of the entire movement. (I say this even though I have great respect for the minority of socialists and democratic leftists who, on the basis of the same religious principles that bring them to our movement, disagree with the majority of us on this matter.)

There is another old-fashioned social value that I think might be a new idea for the '80s: racial integration. There was a certain logic in the development of the black nationalist trend in the civil rights movement of the '60s. The whites in that movement, and I do not exclude myself, sometimes showed a touch of *noblesse oblige* in an otherwise excellent commitment. The blacks were right to be frustrated at idealistic whites who were going to "save" them, and they understandably insisted upon organizing and leading their own movement. Some of the organizational forms and tactics—particularly the flirtation with violence—were, and are, wrong. But one has to understand the context that gave rise to those attitudes.

The context has changed. The CBC alternative budget is a perfect witness to the accomplishments of the black political movement. So is the role being played by blacks in major American unions and in the churches. And there is an enormously important social issue that, I think, can unite us, black and white: the struggle of integrated quality public education in the United States. There is the Moynihan bill that would provide tax expenditures for private—which in many cases would effectively mean segregated—education. That would strike a massive blow at one of the critically important democratic institutions in the society, the public school. And there is, of course, Reagan's even crasser support for tax exemptions for segregated education. Significantly, the president had to beat a clumsy retreat on this issue. For there is, I think, a mobilizable constituency for quality integrated and public education.

Bureaucracy

FOR A GENERATION, the American right has been attacking the welfare state by denouncing its bureaucratic tendencies. Much of that assault is based on fiction: federal employment has just about kept pace with population growth during the last two decades; it is government at the grass roots that has grown, particularly in the health and education sectors and, on the whole, for the good. Even more important, since *all* economic proposals that are now being debated call for some planning, the actual result of the "antibureaucratism" slogans of the right is to dismantle institutions that protect people and to provide for hidden, and therefore elite, planning. Milton Friedman and his ilk spin 18th-century fantasies to legitimate the late 20th-century domination of politics and economics by corporate power.

But just because the rightist critique in this area is either a well-intentioned proposal for irresponsible bureaucracy or a fraud designed to conceal the bureaucratic reality of late capitalism, it does not mean that the left can ignore the issue. Far from it. The left is not for planning or public ownership or the democratization of investment as an end in itself; those measures are ways to increase the democratic power of the majority over the economic decisions that determine so much of their lives. We are, in short, for truly democratic planning, truly democratic public ownership, genuine democratization, and we see the process of decision-making as having a profound impact upon the priorities that will be decided upon.

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Therefore the democratic left should adopt a basic principle, which it seeks to implement in the third stage of the welfare state: that wherever planning decisions are to be made, public funds be available to significant groups that wish to engage in counterplanning. With the enormous increase in the sophistication of planning "technology," monopoly control of computers and experts becomes as much a threat to democracy as monopoly control of money and factories.

Socialists have never argued that the majority possesses technical expertise. We have said —and continue to say—that the majority could make the basic *value choices* better than the elites that speak in its name. But the translation of those value choices into political programs is, under modern conditions, a process that requires computers and experts. In short, we are not simply seeking a progressive resolution to the economic crisis of the second stage of the welfare state—but an increase in justice and freedom for the entire society.

V

The program outlined here has obvious political implications. It speaks to the needs of constituencies that are a potential majority force in the United States.

The trade union movement, the largest organized component of the democratic left, cannot, on its own, win a national election. Neither can the minorities and the poor, even assuming that they overcome internal rivalries and the low level of political participation that is one of the worst consequences of being put into an economically and socially inferior position. Women now are slightly in the majority of the society, but women committed to feminist principles are a minority within that majority. The various movements staffed by the college-educated "new class"—the environmental, peace, and disarmament movements and other groups —have had a remarkable impact on America in recent years but they, as the 1972 campaign dramatically demonstrated, are nowhere near a majority either.

Conversely, as long as this crisis persists, trade unionists will be on the defensive, struggling against demands for "give backs" in which they are asked to pay for the incompetent investment policies made in the boardrooms. The assault on the minorities and the poor will continue, environmental gains of the past decade will be scapegoated and sacrificed, and a frustrated, embittered social atmosphere will make the Moral Majority's attacks on women's rights, on gays, on dissident books, and on all other "deviants" that much more plausible and effective. In short, in the reactionary scenario, the historic reel could begin to run backward and advances made 50 years ago —such as Social Security—could be subverted or even abolished.

Worse, such a situation could lead to internecine struggles among the victims: the organized against the unorganized; black against brown and yellow and red as well as white; female against male; Northeast against Southwest; the health lobby against the school lobby; and on and on. There would be a war of each against all at the bottom and middle of the society, and the only winners would be those at the very top, whose security would be increased as the energy for significant social change is drained away in civil wars between the losers.

The program outlined here for the third stage of the welfare state seeks to identify a common denominator of economic and social need that can politically unite all the progressive movements. That does not mean that each of them abandons its full agenda. It means that each commits itself to the united movement as well as to that fuller, more specific agenda. Indeed, it should be frankly acknowledged that constituencies that join together behind this basic program might fight one another on other issues; for instance, some Catholics will, in addition to joining in the campaign for a truly democratic foreign policy in the Third World, work in right-to-life movements that are at loggerheads with feminists.

But if there is political maturity—if such disagreements are fought out in such a way as to make the unity behind a common program possible—those problems can be kept manageable. What is at stake is not a total transforma-

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tion of American society. Rather, it is the challenge of proposing and implementing significant structural changes of the system within the system. Clearly, as this analysis has demonstrated, the crisis of the welfare state is going to be resolved by national economic planning.

Now the momentous question at issue is: what kind of planning? Top-down, corporate-dominated, nondemocratic planning? Or new institutions for a third stage of the welfare state that, if it will not eliminate private corporate power, will bring this power under a degree of popular control and democratize decision-making power over economic allocation and investment?

The issue is not simply an economic program. It is creating a new space for human freedom and autonomy under the complex conditions of late twentieth-century life. □

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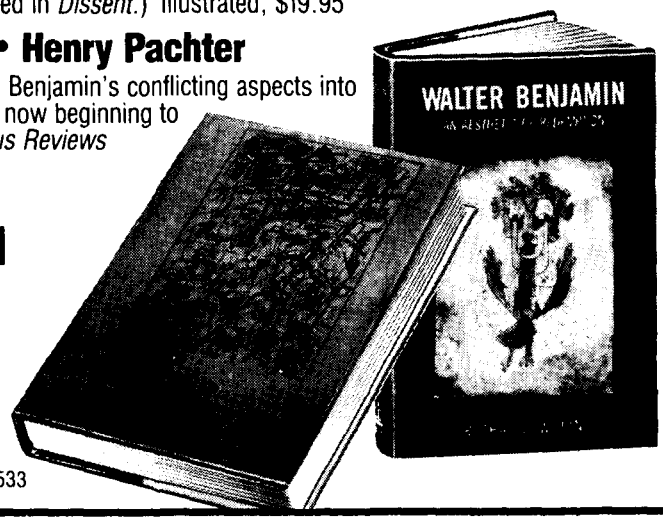

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Jorge Semprun

A Day in Buchenwald

Jorge Semprun, now living in Paris, is the author of several novels and screenplays (among them Z, The Confession, *and* La Guerre est finie*). The son of an ambassador of the Spanish Republic, Semprun fought in the French Resistance and was imprisoned in Buchenwald. A leader of the Spanish Communist underground from 1956 to 1964, he was expelled from the party for what later came to be called "Eurocommunist" views.*

In the pages we excerpt below from What a Beautiful Sunday! *(which Harcourt Brace Jovanovich will publish this fall), Semprun presents a remarkable narrative whose flavor can only be appreciated in reading the full text. Insisting, as he does throughout, on a strict order of "chronology," Semprun bends time and memory, plays with them, as he moves backward to the famous conversations between Goethe (who had lived so near Buchenwald) and his friend Eckermann, and forward to a lunch in 1960 with a French Communist proletarian who had shared that day in Buchenwald in 1944, to discussions with Merleau-Ponty in a Parisian café in the '50s, to reflections on passing Marx's home in London, to his elevation to the executive committee of the Spanish Communist party and his expulsion therefrom, to the stay in a resort for party functionaries in Russia (with sharp observations about the Spanish Communist leader Carrillo, about Khrushchev, and others)—always returning, "chronologically," to that "beautiful Sunday" in Buchenwald, which was, in fact, much like any other Sunday in that concentration camp, and really quite "shitty."*—Eds.

"Admiring the view?" Jehovah asks.

Or, rather, his witness: the Jehovah's Witness.

I heard someone arrive, footsteps on the snow, in the copse on the edge of the Little Camp, between the quarantine huts and the infirmary, the *Revier*. I turned around for a second, listening to that crunching of snow. I did not fear the inopportune arrival of some SS–Blockführer. They aren't in the habit of venturing into the camp on Sunday afternoons. Those on duty keep to the watchtowers or guard posts, snug and warm. Those not on duty are drinking beer in the SS canteen, awaiting their turn to go on guard. Or they're chasing girls, in Weimar. But if it really wasn't an SS officer, it could be some prowler. Some young Russian might have followed me and decided to pinch the leather boots I was wearing. So I turned my head when I heard the crunching of feet on the snow behind me. I didn't want to be caught by some Russian prowler armed with a knife or a bludgeon.

But it wasn't a Russian prowler, it was Jehovah. I recognized at once his tall figure and white hair.

I think he was named Johann, but I'm not quite sure. I've decided to call him Jehovah in this story, whenever I have occasion to name him. Jehovah's as good as Johann. I even think Jehovah's easier to remember. And he was a man of God; no doubt about that.

"Admiring the view?" Jehovah asks.

Excerpted from *What a Beautiful Sunday!* by Jorge Semprun, translated by Alan Sheridan. A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book. Copyright © 1980 by Editions Grasset et Fasquelle. English translation copyright © 1982 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. To be published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

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He is standing next to me in the copse that stretches beyond the quarantine camp, just before you reach the open space, the border on which the machine guns in the watchtowers are trained.

Yes, I'm admiring the view.

Every Sunday in Buchenwald, I came and admired that view. Or perhaps not every one of my seventy-two Sundays in Buchenwald. No doubt there were certain Sundays when a snowstorm or a torrential rain prevented me from walking out to the edge of the Little Camp and admiring the view of Thuringia.

It was afternoon, of course, during the few hours of leisure we enjoyed on Sunday afternoons. And on sunny days, I went out at sunset, at whatever hour sunset occurred, depending on the season. The sun set almost opposite me, slightly to the left of the observation point that I had chosen. I looked at the sun setting magnificently over the plain of Thuringia, on the western horizon, behind the blue line of the Thuringian hills. In winter, this blue line was white, and the sun pale and brittle, like an old silver coin worn with use.

Jehovah is standing behind me, and he, too, is looking at the winter landscape in the December sunlight, brief and glorious, like that of Austerlitz, casting its last light.

"Admiring the view?" he had said. The question was badly phrased. He could see very well that I was admiring the view. There was nothing else I could be doing here but admiring the view. It was obvious that I was looking at the Thuringian plain, the village in the distance, the calm gray smoke that was not smoke from the crematorium: life outside. He no doubt meant: "What do you find to admire in the view?" Or "What does that view mean to you?" "What fleeting, violent happiness, threatened by some incommunicable anguish, does this view arouse in you?" Anyway, something of the kind. But he said flatly: "Admiring the view?" Even Jehovah may have difficulty clearly formulating the right questions. Even He may get caught up in the banality of everday language, as we know.

So I say nothing, since he hasn't really asked the right question. I wait with rather sly curiosity for him to say something else.

Usually, Jehovah begins any conversation by quoting a passage from the Bible. It's an opening that has become something of a ritual since I've known him, and since we started talking to each other. And the words from the Bible are always the right words for the occasion. It's beginning to annoy me. But today, before that view of snow on the Ettersberg and the plain of Thuringia, I wonder what quotation from the Bible he's going to come up with. There can't be many references to snow in the Bible.

So I wait, with rather sly curiosity. How's Jehovah going to get out of this one?

He turns his pale blue eyes upon me.

"God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things which we cannot comprehend. For to the snow he says, 'Fall on the earth'; and to the shower and the rain, 'Be strong.' He seals up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work. . . ."

He declaims these words in a loud voice. Then he smiles.

"Book of Job, 37:5!"

I nod, admiring and irritated. Then I turn back to the snow that covers the plain of Thuringia, the snow that is now Biblical, immemorial.

I met Jehovah—or, rather, his witness—some months before.

In the Nazi camps, the Jehovah's Witnesses, or Bibelforscher, which was their official label, bore a violet identification triangle. They had been interned because they refused to perform military service or to take the oath of allegiance to the German flag. In Buchenwald, the Jehovah's Witnesses had been singled out for special persecution. At first, they were automatically put into the disciplinary companies. On several occasions, the SS command tried to make them abandon their principles. In September 1939, for example, shortly after the outbreak of war, they were all gathered on the Appellplatz to hear the SS commandant announce that if one of them, just one of them, refused to join the army, they would all be shot. Two armed SS companies surrounded the Jehovah's Witnesses, but not one of them agreed to fight for Germany. Eventually, they were

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beaten and deprived of their last personal belongings, but the SS command did not carry out its threat of execution.

In 1944, when I arrived in Buchenwald, the Bibelforscher survivors were working mainly as nurses in the camp hospitals or as servants in the SS officers' villas. Quiet, devoted, tireless, they waited patiently for the end of the apocalyptic evils that had arrived with the fall of Satan upon the earth, in 1914, and for the millennium that would follow, at some not too distant but as yet indeterminate date, ushering in a New World, in which the Elect would govern the earth from their heavenly home.

Yet even at this final stage in the history of the camps, the Jehovah's Witnesses were still victims of collective beatings. In the spring of 1944, I remember, they were gathered on the Appellplatz and searched. Meanwhile, SS detachments ransacked their barracks and their places of work, looking, it was said, for religious tracts or pamphlets hostile to the regime.

I met Jehovah in September 1944, at the beginning of September, if I remember rightly.

Some days before, after the evening roll call, a rumor had run through the camp, whispered at first, then growing gradually louder and louder till it became an explosion of silent joy, a commotion of cries and stifled chants: Paris was free, Paris had been liberated! We ran from one block to another to find our pals, to share their joy. In Block 34, which was just opposite mine, the rejoicing knew no bounds. The block leader heard the commotion that the Frenchmen were making, and for once he didn't object. He didn't come rushing out of his hut, yelling that the French were dirty, undisciplined, lazy, shit, nur *Scheisse*, nothing but shit, and all they were good for was the crematorium!

In the Nazi camps, everyone will tell you, the French were not very popular. I don't mean popular with the SS, of course; it wouldn't mean much if the French were unpopular with them. But it was among the other deportees that the French weren't—or, rather, France wasn't—very popular. The antifascists of all the nations of Europe reproached France for, among other things, the policy of nonintervention in Spain. The Poles, antifascist or not—and most of them were not, at least in the sense that the Communist vocabulary ended up giving to the term—reproached France for abandoning them in September 1939. And everyone, Poles and Germans, Czechs and Russians, everyone criticized France for allowing itself to be so easily beaten by the German army in 1940. This bitter, widespread contempt for France and the French was really frustrated love. In 1940, people expected France to perform some kind of miracle, to reverse the tide of war. Throughout German-occupied Europe people hoped for a miracle, a second battle of the Marne.

Anyway, the news of the liberation of Paris radically changed the attitude of most of the deportees, and especially of the kapos and German block leaders, the cadres of the kazettlerian [*Konzentrationslager*] bureaucracy, toward the French.

The day after this news reached us, a pervasive joy reigned in Buchenwald. It was as if we all felt that whatever was still to happen, nothing had been in vain, since we had lived long enough to hear of the liberation of Paris. In the indistinct light of the summer dawn, in the morning murmur from the beech forest, the French deportees marched to the roll call that day in close formation, in rhythmic steps—they who had always dragged their feet, always lacked discipline!—steps, that morning, that were not obeying SS orders, but were the proud steps of victory—we didn't have our Marne, but we had Paris!—they marched up to the Appellplatz as one solid mass, eyes fixed on the sun rising in the East, beyond the square chimney of the crematorium.

Gustav Herling recounts a similar episode. It, too, was connected with Paris. But it wasn't a joyful occasion, for it was connected, not with the memory of the liberation of Paris, but with that of its fall.

On a June day in 1940, in the prison of Vitebsk, the door of Gustav's cell opened and a new arrival entered that overpopulated space. The man stood stock still, with all eyes upon him, and murmured: "Paris has fallen. . . ." And in the cell of that Soviet prison at Vitebsk, in June 1940, a sigh, a murmur of distress broke out. "Paris had fallen, Paris, Paris. . . .

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It's incredible that even the simplest people in that cell, people who had never seen France, felt the fall of Paris like the death of their last hope, an even more irremediable defeat than the surrender of Warsaw. The night of slavery, which covered Europe, also obscured the narrow piece of sky, crisscrossed by the bars of our cell," says Gustav Herling. But perhaps you don't know who Gustav Herling is. Neither do I. I know very little about him, in fact.

It was Josef Czapski who got me to read Herling's *A World Apart*. Published in London in 1951, it is no doubt one of the most hallucinatory accounts, in its sobriety, its restrained compassion, in the naked perfection of its narrative shape, that I have ever read of a Stalinist camp. It is, moreover, a historical document of the first order, providing a detailed description as well as a fully verified general view of the Stalinist Gulag in the years 1940–42.

But perhaps some distinguished Marxist will reproach me with using the term "Gulag" too unscientifically. Take Alain Lipietz: he's a distinguished Marxist. And he's an even more distinguished economist. In his latest essay, *Crise et Inflation: Pourquoi?*, in a paragraph devoted to capitalist despotism in the entrepreneurial world, he makes the following imbecilic remark: "The word 'despotism' can shock only nonproletarians who have never undergone an apprenticeship in a factory, and who can see Gulags only in their neighbor's eye, when Billancourt and Javel* are under their own noses." Did I say imbecilic? Perhaps a stronger word is called for. First, one should note the crude empiricism of the sneer at "nonproletarians who have never undergone an apprenticeship in a factory." As far as I know, Lenin never underwent such an apprenticeship. I cite Lenin not out of personal reverence, but simply because Lipietz still seems to make a special case of him. Marx never underwent an apprenticeship in a factory either. His apprenticeships, and very long they were, took place in libraries, which didn't prevent him from discovering the capitalist despotism in the corporation and giving not only a concrete description of it, but also a theoretical explanation for it. On the other hand, there are millions—tens of millions—of workers who have undergone apprenticeships in factories, apprenticeships without end, apprenticeships for life, apprenticeships as convicts sentenced for life by the despotism of the entrepreneur—and who are unable to put a name to that entrepreneur, to know him and therefore to struggle effectively against him. So that phrase actually amounts to very little. What exactly is the point of it? To please two or three fellow intellectuals, to please oneself, to flatter a populist sensibility that is still prevalent among Paris intellectuals, particularly when they have a predilection for the hallucinogenic virtues of the dialectic of the late lamented Chairman Mao.

But there is worse to come. There is that other phrase, about those who "see Gulags only in their neighbor's eye, when Billancourt and Javel are under their own noses." Billancourt—how much nonsense has been said about it! The Gulags—that is, the concentration camps—have never liquidated the despotism of the entrepreneur, the despotism of social-bureaucratic capital in the U.S.S.R. The Russian worker has the sad privilege of knowing both oppressions, that of the Gulags and that of despotism of the entrepreneur, beside which that of the capitalistic system is paradise. There is no possibility of liquidating the despotism of capital at the factory towns of Billancourt and Javel if one conceals from the working class, or obfuscates with sentences like the above, the existence of the Gulags in the U.S.S.R., in China, and in every country where power is monopolized by a single party that silences the proletariat, all the better to speak in its name.

In Buchenwald, then, at the beginning of September 1944, I was in the entranceway of the camp library, which had been set up in the same hut as the *Arbeitsstatistik* and the *Schreibstube*. The entranceway of the library was a tiny space between the hallway of the hut and the library itself, in which one could see the shelves piled with books beyond the

* Industrial centers in France.

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counter window. I was waiting for Anton, the librarian, to bring me the book I had asked for when the door from the hallway opened and Jehovah came in.

He was standing next to me, book in hand.

"Mahlzeit!" he said, by way of greeting. I turned around, intrigued.

One could not say that greetings, leave-takings, or polite expressions of any kind were a frequent occurrence in Buchenwald. There were the Austrians who would greet you with their singsong *"Servus!"* to wish you good day or good luck, but they were the exception. The language of Buchenwald was rather restrained, as far as the polite forms of social intercourse were concerned.

So I turned around to the guy who had just spoken in such a quiet but warm voice.

He was wearing the violet triangle. He had white hair over a still-young face. A face still alive, I mean. Not just a mask. His pale, transparent blue eyes looked at me with almost unbearable penetration.

"Mahlzeit!" I said, in turn.

At that moment, the librarian came back to the counter and put down the book that I had asked for. It was a thick, hardbound volume. Jehovah looked at its title and read it aloud, his voice trembling slightly, perhaps with surprise. Or joy. Or joyful surprise.

"Absalom, Absalom!" he cried out.

That was the title of the book, of course.

I looked at Jehovah, intrigued.

He was still talking calmly and clearly as he looked at me.

"Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. . . ."

He stopped and raised a finger.

"Second Book of Samuel, 13!"

I nod, somewhat surprised.

I'm not a sufficiently keen reader of the Bible to remember that the story of Absalom is to be found in the Second Book of Samuel. Anyway, whether it's to be found there, or in the Book of Kings, or even in the Book of Chronicles, doesn't mean much to me. In my memory of childhood readings of Holy Scripture, the name of Absalom evokes, first and foremost, one very precise image: that of a warrior caught by his hair in the lower branches of an oak or an olive tree, who in this position is pierced by the spears and swords of attacking enemies. That is my first image of Absalom: a horseman lifted off his horse and held fast by his hair to the branches of a tree. Absalom, in short, ranked for me with Samson: both were guys who had had trouble because of their hair.

But it's not to revive those childhood recollections of the Bible that I ask the camp librarian for *Absalom, Absalom!* It's because of a young woman with blue eyes.

It was at the Sorbonne in June 1942.

She came into the room where we were waiting our turn to be called before Professor Guillaume for the oral examination in psychology. Most of the other candidates were unknown to me. I must admit that I didn't attend many lectures, that year.

I was waiting absent-mindedly in that dusty, musty room of the Sorbonne when she came in.

Later, I sometimes wondered what it was that made that young woman beautiful. In September 1944, for example, in Buchenwald, listening to Jehovah reciting a passage from the Second Book of Samuel, I suddenly remembered her beauty with a pang. Again I was overwhelmed by its radiant mystery.

Standing by the window of the camp library, listening to Jehovah recite the beginning of the Biblical story of Absalom, I remembered the strange beauty of that young woman who had suddenly appeared before me, two years earlier, in the decrepit, suffocating examination room in the Sorbonne. I couldn't help thinking of her, of course. It was she, Jacqueline B., who had lent me *Sartoris*, my favorite Faulkner novel, some weeks after we had met. I was leaning against the window of the Buchenwald library two years later, holding the thick, hardcover volume of the German translation of *Absalom, Absalom!*, and I couldn't help remembering the young woman with whom I discussed Faulkner in the summer of 1942, dazzled by the strange light in her blue eyes.

The night before, I had found the title of this Faulkner novel in the catalogue of the camp

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library. I was not looking for anything in particular, vaguely wanting to borrow a work of fiction this time, rather than a volume of Hegel, Nietzsche, or Lange. Suddenly I noticed the name Faulkner and the title of that novel, *Absalom, Absalom!* It wasn't the first time I'd consulted the catalogue, but I'd never noticed that novel before, I suppose because I didn't expect to find it there. Now, when I saw the name of Faulkner and the title *Absalom, Absalom!*, the blood drained from my face. Not because of Faulkner or that novel, which I had not yet read. Not only because of Faulkner, anyway. Above all because of the memory of that young woman, Jacqueline B., which had suddenly reappeared.

And so that novel—bought, like all the other books in the library, with the money of the German internees and chosen from lists drawn up by them (the SS command, naturally enough, took part of the money collected by the *Kazettler* to buy and place in the library fifty-odd copies of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and other works by theoreticians of the Nazi Thousand-Year Reich)—that Faulkner novel just happened to be there, by chance—if one must call "chance" some obscure, perhaps even inexorable, chain of causes and effects—in the camp library.

Who had ordered it? What memories did this book hold for the German prisoner who had put it on the list of books to be bought? Why had this book escaped the successive purges ordered by the SS command, whose object was to eliminate from the library shelves all non-German authors and all dubious, decadent works?

I would never know. But that book was there, in any case. It even seems to me that the only reason *Absalom, Absalom!* was to be found in the Buchenwald library—the only serious reason, I mean, one that cannot simply be brushed aside—was precisely the anticipation of that moment—unforeseeable from a strictly logical point of view—when my eye would catch the author and title in the library catalogue.

It was destined for me, in other words.

Whereas the Second book of Samuel has nothing to do with me. I looked at Jehovah, murmured a polite goodbye, and went off carrying Faulkner's novel, which reminded me of a young woman with blue eyes.

Life before, life outside. □

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Michael Walzer

Socialism and the Gift Relationship

I: Welfare and Philanthropy

A few years ago, the *New York Times* carried a long article on the decline of philanthropy and volunteer service in the more advanced welfare states of Western Europe.[1] In such countries as Sweden, Denmark, and West Germany, philanthropic organizations of all sorts—orphanages, homes for unwed mothers, legal aid societies, hospital and prison visitors, and so on—were in deep trouble. They had always depended heavily on private contributions and unpaid help. The contributions came not only from the very rich but also from large numbers of ordinary citizens. Now, however, the citizens had decided that welfare was a matter of justice, not charity, the business of the state, not of individuals. They paid their taxes and they were done. The state, they felt, should take what was needed; what it didn't take belonged to them and could legitimately and without qualms be spent on themselves. The rich undoubtedly thought taxes too high and preferred charitable giving, which they could set at any level they liked; but they too were fully prepared, the tax rate being what it was, to give less to charity.

Volunteer workers had historically come from the middle and upper classes and had repeated the conventional pattern of middle- and upper-class life. Men played the larger part in managing philanthropic organizations, while the actual caretaking and the face-to-face relations with the poor, the sick, the old, and the very young were sustained by women. Work in hospitals and schools represented a kind of extramural domesticity, and it was most readily undertaken by housewives who had help in the house, or grown-up children, and time on their hands. But now the old pattern was under attack; both management and caretaking were increasingly professionalized; more women were working; the state welfare services did not look like amateur callings; and to work without pay for the state, which commanded such vast resources and hired such an extraordinary number of people, seemed in any case gratuitous.

This last idea was, of course, confirmed and reiterated by state officials, welfare bureaucrats, the leaders of civil service unions. For private philanthropy had always eluded governmental coordination, and volunteers worked at jobs from which other people, who needed the work more, might well make a living. Nor did the poor themselves, once they began to find a political voice, have much use for amateurs. How could their rights be made to wait upon the vagaries and perennial inadequacies of private giving? Only government officials could help them with the promptness and consistency to which they were, as citizens, entitled. Just as the state from its origins had provided military security, enlisting an army of soldiers, so now the welfare state should pro-

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vide social security, enlisting an army of caretakers. And just as private wars had been eliminated, so now private charitable campaigns should be eliminated. For military security and social security alike required large-scale organization, central planning, and democratic (coercive) control.

In the United States, the welfare state has developed rather differently. It has not developed as far, for one thing, and it has tended to grow alongside of rather than to replace private charities. A great deal of tax money has been filtered through organizations that are privately run and (in part) privately financed. There has been less concern with overall coordination or blanket coverage. Some 300,000 "nonprofit" organizations exist in this country today, providing religious and educational as well as welfare services; in 1979, these groups managed to raise $36 billion in individual contributions (corporations and foundations added another $5 billion).[2] This is a lot of money, and yet the government's share of the welfare budget is vastly greater—and as a proportion of the whole it has been growing steadily.

A large number of privately run services, like most of our private universities, are no longer capable of financing their own operations; they are effectively state subsidiaries (and they are increasingly reliant on the same sort of professionals who run the state services). For all our pluralism, then, the long-term trends in this country are not so different from those in the more centralized and advanced states of Western Europe.

But now the Reagan administration, encouraged by neoconservative intellectuals, has set itself to reverse these trends. Its policy is nothing if not simple: the Administration has drastically cut governmental spending on welfare; it has cut taxes, and it has exhorted men and women, and companies and corporations, to increase their charitable contributions. Another example of supply-side economics: more private wealth is supposed to produce more charity. This, the Reaganites argue, is the American way. It will make welfare less bureaucratic, more intimate and neighborly. It will also make for less welfare: no one knowledgeable about such matters seriously expects individual and corporate giving to increase enough to replace or even come near replacing the loss of government money (and, anyway, lower tax rates will probably reduce rather than increase charitable giving, since they significantly raise the cost of charity). Nor is there likely to be a great upsurge in volunteer work, even among loyal Republicans.

Many people are going to be hurt, then, and so there is a battle here that should not be shirked. But there are also questions of political and moral theory—and of strategy too, for it can't be doubted that Reagan has seized upon deeply felt problems of the welfare system. What should socialists think about philanthropy and volunteer service? How should we respond to their decline or their likely future decline?

In the past, charity has been much disliked and commonly denounced on the left: it is a bourgeois form of *noblesse oblige*, a way of adjusting to, without removing, the inequities of a class society, indeed, a way of displaying and intensifying those inequities. But I think the questions are not so easy. The conservative critique of the welfare state, insofar as it isn't merely an ideological cover for the dismantling of the welfare state, touches on points of interest to socialists too. After all, a great deal of socialist activity has been paid for by private contributions or made possible by voluntary labor for the cause. The left, like the church, has had its tithe. And isn't everyday human welfare also a cause? Why should we become the defenders of the bureaucratic state?

The old animus against charity is set forth very nicely in a few sentences in Oscar Wilde's "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." "The best among the poor are never grateful" for charity, Wilde writes, and then goes on:

> They are ungrateful, discontented, disobedient, and rebellious. They are quite right to be so. Charity they feel to be a ridiculously inadequate mode of partial restitution, or a sentimental dole, usually accompanied by some impertinent attempt on the part of the sentimentalist to tyrannize over their private lives. . . . As for begging, it is safer to beg than to take, but it is finer to take than to beg.[3]

There is a special rebelliousness here, which

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doesn't have much to do (as the last sentence suggests) with political action. But Wilde also has some understanding for the vision of moral integrity, of human wholeness and strength, that sustains socialist politics. The problem with charity is that it breeds dependency. And the argument against charity is indeed connected to the argument against beggary. Begging is a performance extracted from the poor by the charitable, and the performance is degrading, an especially painful example of the power of money.

"Charity wounds him who receives," writes Marcel Maus in his classic essay *The Gift*, "and our whole moral effort is directed toward suppressing the unconscious harmful patronage of the rich almoner."[4] At least, that has been the moral effort of the left. Nor does the wounding work only one way. The vices of dependency are reciprocal: deference, passivity, humility on the one hand, arrogance and self-importance on the other. It is one of the purposes of the welfare state, second only to the relief of poverty and pain, to overcome these vices. But the mere replacement of private charity by public provision doesn't have this effect. It is necessary nonetheless, for the state is more likely than any private group of citizens to maintain an effective program of relief. By itself, however, relief doesn't produce independence; old patterns are likely to survive; the poor are still deferential, passive, and humble (or "the best of them" are caught up in a diffuse rebelliousness), while public officials take on the arrogance and self-importance of their private predecessors.

Insofar as these vices have been overcome, it's not been in the welfare state so much as in the movements and parties that fight to create the welfare state. Independence is born in political action, when previously silent men and women organize and speak out for themselves and one another. The movements and parties of the left have been the primary locus of self-help and mutual aid in the modern world. And they have been supported, as I've said, by the dues and the donated time and energy of their members, even when their members were desperately poor and without adequate resources for health care, housing, education, and so on. While making demands on the general community, they have constituted communities in themselves, self-sufficient and self-sustaining. But it remains an open question whether this sort of thing can be incorporated into the welfare state, once there is a welfare state. Imagine the left in power, its leaders our officials: what forms might self-help and mutual aid take then?

The old idea was this: first we would abolish poverty, and then the formerly poor, all the relieved and rescued men and women, would simply participate as citizens in the everyday politics of the community. The socialized economy would be their mutual aid program. Their independence would consist in freedom from fear and want. But even on the most optimistic view of the welfare state, even if we assume that poverty has been abolished, it will still be the case that people experience fear and want and that they need help—because they are sick or old or alone, or in a hundred different sorts of trouble. And then, their independence will be a function of the kind of help they receive. Like any wealthy philanthropist, welfare officials can create a client population of men and women whom they sustain, so to speak, in their helplessness. The goal of a socialist welfare state must be the opposite of this, not to end the need for help, for there is no end to that, but to involve the needy in mutual help. The struggle against poverty and illness is an activity in which many citizens, poor and not-so-poor and well-to-do alike, ill and not-so-ill and healthy alike, ought to participate. That means that there has to be a place, even within a program of public provision, even when welfare is conceived as a matter of justice, for what Richard Titmuss calls, in his book of that name, "the gift relationship."[5]

Titmuss studied the different procedures through which countries collect blood for hospital use, focusing chiefly on purchase and donation, the market on the one hand and a kind of popular philanthropy on the other. His book is a defense of donation (he would actually ban the sale of blood) because it is more efficient, producing better, cleaner blood, and also, and more important, because it expresses and enhances a spirit of communal altruism.

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The argument is skillful and passionate. But it might have been even more useful for socialist theory than it is, had Titmuss attempted a second comparison—for which, however, he could have found no practical examples. Imagine a tax on blood, a legal requirement that every citizen contribute so many pints each year. This would greatly improve the supply, since it would increase the number of donors and enable medical authorities to choose among them, collecting blood only from the healthiest citizens, much as we conscript only the able-bodied for military service. Titmuss would still want to claim, I expect, that the gift relation is better, and not only because a tax on blood would represent, within our cultural world, too great an attack on bodily integrity. For it is his purpose to argue that there is a virtue in private giving, and he would rightly doubt that this virtue could be duplicated by public taking, even if the taking were mandated by a democratic decision.

Here is an unexceptionable, indeed a highly desirable, form of charity. It does not represent an exercise of power by men and women who happen to be rich in disease-free blood; nor does it make for deference and dependency among those in need. Donors act out of a desire to help their fellow citizens, and they do help, and undoubtedly they feel some pride in having helped. But none of this generates any special self-importance, for the help is widely available. The great majority of citizens are capable of giving blood. So equality redeems charity.

This argument works as well for money as for blood, whenever the capacity to contribute is widely shared and philanthropic organizations are not radically dependent upon the largesse of a few powerful families. It is not now an argument against taxation, for the most basic welfare services can only be provided as they should be if the provision is collective and coercive. But it does suggest reasons for leaving room within and around the institutions of the welfare state for private philanthropy. The act of giving is good in itself; it is one way of expressing the political emotion that Aristotle called "friendship." And the connected activities of fund-raising and decision-making involve ordinary citizens in work that parallels and supplements the work of officials and generally increases the level of socially useful activity. All this together represents a kind of selflessness, or at least of unselfishness, that welfare-as-justice seems to rule out, to make unnecessary. In fact, it is never unnecessary. The gift relation is one of the fundamental forms of social decency.

But it isn't blood or money, it is time and energy that constitute the most valuable gifts that citizens can make to one another. The welfare state would surely be a disaster if the seeming omnicompetence of its officials led to a reduction in amateur helping and caretaking. In fact, what we require is a radical increase in all such activities. Neoconservative writers indulge themselves and delude their readers with sentimental memories of neighborhoods that were once models of mutual aid. I doubt that there ever were such neighborhoods. But there was, if one goes back far enough, a domestic economy that more easily integrated old people and partially disabled people than the modern economy does; there were more extended families and less geographic mobility, so that people needed less help than they do today; and there were, above all, fewer people—the old and the sick died sooner.

The welfare state is not best understood as a bureaucratic substitute for older and better forms of neighborliness and mutuality; it is, first, an augmentation of the old forms, and then a whole set of new arrangements, made necessary by new social conditions. Necessary but not sufficient: unless the arrangements generate in turn a neighborliness and mutuality appropriate to the new conditions. For welfare officials can produce at best clean, well-lighted places—hospitals, day-care centers, old-age homes, and so on—intelligently managed, free from corruption and brutality. (And often enough, they can't or they don't do that.) Anything more than that, men and women must provide for themselves and one another.

Consider now some possible forms of mutual help under modern conditions. There are, first, two sorts of mixed forms.

(1) A program of national service would mix coercion and voluntary work. Everyone at a certain age would have to serve (for two years,

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say), but they would choose what they would do from a wide range of possibilities. They could choose organizations that were not directly involved in helping others, like the army (though the army, at least when it is a defending army, is certainly a public service), or they could choose organizations that were directly involved, like hospitals or old-age homes. And if work of the latter sort were organized locally, they might well find themselves helping people they knew, building or strengthening social ties within a familiar world. Such people would not be volunteers in the strict sense, but they would certainly be amateurs, having chosen work they wanted to do or thought worth doing, learning as they worked, and simultaneously seconding and qualifying the efforts of professional men and women. As conscript soldiers create a citizens' army, so conscript social workers would create a lay welfare state. And having themselves served, they might no longer feel degraded if, later on, they needed to seek out the services of others.

(2) The paid volunteer represents a second mixed form, familiar to us in the political life of the left, where young activists often work for subsistence wages, in effect donating to the movement the money their skills would earn on the outside. Similar arrangements sometimes exist in private philanthropic organizations, and they would be entirely suitable in the public sector. Men and women might be paid some small amount of money to work on a part-time basis in an old-age home, say, or to help in the home of a disabled person. The work would still be amateur work, and it would still represent a charitable donation, but the service would be open to people at different income levels. And the payment might take the edge off the donation, undercutting any pretension to high-mindedness on the one side, any feeling of subjection on the other. One can imagine a fairly large number of citizens engaged in this kind of service. Once again: a lay people's welfare state, a reduction in the power of professionals, a diffusion of authority.

(3) But there will still be room, I think, for the unmixed forms of giving and volunteering. These represent what we might think of as *individually focused energy*. My taxes pay for the whole range of welfare services, and particular allocations are determined by a complex political process. They don't and they can't be directed by my own interests. I may have a special concern with schools or hospitals or a special commitment to a religious or ethnic group. The state cannot express such concerns or commitments; it can only make way for them. The expression has to be private, whether at the individual or group level; it takes the form of cash contributions over and above taxes and of voluntary labor.

But if we allow a great deal of leeway for contribution and voluntarism, the overall shape of the welfare state won't be determined by a single democratic political process, and it won't be the same in every city and town. I don't find anything objectionable in that, though it is obviously necessary here to strike a careful balance. The basic parameters of the health-care system, say, must be worked out politically and then generalized across the country. But it is no affront to democracy (or equality) if a particular community, because of the philanthropic activity of its citizens, has better hospitals or more hospital visitors or a more humane program of outpatient care than a number of other communities. At least, it is no affront if the conditions that prevail are really a function of the focused energy and not of the available resources of the citizens. Here, we might say, is a place for "socialist emulation."

A PLURALIST WELFARE STATE need not be what it has been in the United States until now—a shoddy welfare state (and the pluralism an excuse for the shoddiness). *There has to be a decent level of public provision.* Without that, private giving and doing are more likely to degrade than to benefit the people at whom they are aimed. Once we guarantee a decent level, however, pluralism and the philanthropy that sustains it can make for stronger, more various, more broadly based, and more effective welfare programs. Experiments are easier within a decentralized system, run in part by private citizens. That awful sameness in everything from the design of buildings to the endless regulations, the product of bureaucratic rigidity and caution, may to some extent be avoided. And, most important, a welfare state

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in which large numbers of ordinary citizens participate is less likely to isolate its clients. Mutual aid makes for social integration.

Socialists should not rejoice, then, in the decline of private giving and doing. We have our own reasons for disliking the stark juxtaposition of public officials and public wards, even when the officials treat the wards "justly." Socialism is something else. It has as much to do with compassion and solidarity as with justice.

But can pluralism be sustained in a society that does not permit great accumulations of wealth? I have stressed the contributions of ordinary men and women. But these are not, at present, the decisive contributions that enable private philanthropies to keep going. How would the campaign for a new hospital fare, for example, if so-and-so, a man of enormous wealth, did not give a million dollars for the maternity ward or the intensive-care unit (named after himself)? Imagine that same million dollars in the hands of a thousand different people—the distributed profits, say, of a local factory—and one could hardly collect a tenth of it for (any) charitable purpose. So we are told, at any rate; the state would have to step in with its taxing power and all its rules and regulations.

American philanthropy, as currently organized, is radically dependent upon what I once heard a successful fund-raiser call "the princely gift." Indeed, philanthropy has probably never been organized in any other way. It has been true of many cultures, otherwise very different, that men and women of great wealth win glory for themselves by great gifts. This is at once a motive for making money and for giving it away. So charity depends upon inequality (and voluntary labor depends, similarly, upon the existence of a well-to-do and leisured class).

But the price we pay for the "princely gift" is the power of princes. And in addition to all the making of money and the giving of it, there is a great deal of keeping. So princes must be courted, flattered, pandered to, and pleased. Among wealthy men and women, there are always some who give their gifts readily and modestly; it is the others, Maus's "rich almoners," who give charity its bad name on the left. They take their money for authority; their glory requires the dependency of the poor. Still, without private wealth of some sort there can't be private gifts, and there can't be large gifts of the sort that make for the stability and even the independence of private philanthropies without large accumulations of wealth.

Yes; but it doesn't follow that, if individuals can't accumulate wealth, only the state can do so. One can imagine intermediate groups, like the modern corporation, or, for that matter, a factory commune or a trade union, whose members decide to contribute significant funds to local charities. One can imagine the accumulation of money through fund-raising campaigns on a far broader scale than is possible today, with more citizens contributing precisely because they know that they can't depend upon a few rich almoners. One can imagine tax money, in greater amounts than at present, filtered through private organizations. One can imagine, in sum, a more democratic pluralism, a "mobilization of altruistic capacities" for the sake not of one-sided giving and glorying but of mutual aid.[6]

Nor is it necessary, as I have argued elsewhere, that a socialist society set its face entirely against entrepreneurial activity and individual money-making. We aim at greater equality, not absolute equality, and it is the first of these, not the second, that serves to redeem charitable giving and voluntary work. A few petty princes will do us no harm, and their gifts can do much good.

When we defend the welfare state against its contemporary enemies, then, we must remember that the public provision of basic services, while always important, is not the only aim of a socialist politics. We aim also at the abolition of dependency in all its forms. And that requires a society far livelier than the standard version of the welfare state, less routinized, full of energy and experiment, where men and women organize in a hundred different ways to help themselves and one another. All this requires in turn more than one directing center and more than one source of funds.

We have most often thought of socialism (not wrongly) in terms of public enterprise and

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large-scale organization. But there is another scale on which to measure the deep relations that make for a decent society. How is ordinary life managed, shaped, enabled, and controlled? Who decides? Who acts? Who is passive, deferential, hurt? Socialist answers to these questions require, indeed, a certain social framework, a certain kind of state. But they also require high levels of participation in small groups and local arrangements. Settling the big problems, even if that were possible, is never enough, for men and women are made and destroyed by the way we deal and help them to deal with the small problems, the intimate difficulties of everyday life. Here we must count on the commitment of individual citizens to one another. The gifts they bring, over and above what they are bound to give, represent an enhancement of both democracy and socialism, without which neither one would be as attractive as we have imagined it to be.

And if the gift is crucial to welfare, it is even more crucial to politics (and culture too)—as I will now try to argue.

II: Politics and Private Gifts

How would a group of political dissidents in a socialist society go about publishing a magazine called *Dissent*? The particular question raises a more general one about the economic support of political and cultural activity. And it forces us immediately to confront the neoconservative argument that a free politics and culture requires capitalism, that private wealth is freedom's crucial resource. As in the case of welfare and philanthropy, the usual socialist response is too quick and unconsidered. The neoconservatives are wrong (again), but their argument is worth worrying about. Worrying is one of the functions of this and future *Dissents*, and it will still be necessary under socialism. How will we finance this crucial activity?

How do we finance it now? *Dissent* was founded by a group of friends, none of them wealthy, who contributed the money themselves or solicited a small circle of comrades and political allies. Over the years since then, the magazine has earned roughly half of what it costs; the rest has been raised, as our readers know well, through an appeal for funds every two years. Some 400 readers make contributions, plus all the editors. I suppose that the income of this group is rather higher than the national average; a very small number are well-to-do, and without their gifts the magazine probably could not survive. Very occasionally, we have gotten small amounts of money, for special projects, from labor unions and private foundations. And we have brought out a number of collections of articles with commercial publishers, all of which have made some money, never very much.

Our costs are determined in large part by the postal rates and the market. We have to pay for paper, typesetting, printing, binding, handling and mailing, and newsstand distribution. All these are products and services that we buy like any other consumer, without regard to our political views—though friendly printers sometimes give us a "price." We don't pay for articles, and that undoubtedly is the most important of the contributions we receive, possible only because almost all of our writers and editors earn their living elsewhere. Our tiny staff receives subsistence wages (or less), a practice, as I said in the first part of this essay, that is common on the left generally, though it is certainly easier for young activists than for older ones. What we do to staff members and writers might be called exploitation. Or, it is another example of the gift relationship. All in all, publishing *Dissent* isn't easy, but with a little help from our friends, we keep going.

How would things be different in a socialist society? The most common answer is constructed along what can be called the welfare-state model. The state would provide a supply of paper, access to printing houses and distribu-

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tion centers, and subsidized mailing for a number of magazines. But what number? Which ones? Chosen how and by whom? One can imagine a committee giving out magazines to would-be editors much as fellowships are awarded to artists, writers, and scholars. The distributive criteria might be complex: popularity (predicted readership) would have to be taken into account, but the committee could also concern itself with diversity, geographical distribution, the relative competence of the would-be editors, the coherence, forcefulness, and originality of their proposals, and so on. It would certainly be best if there were more than one committee. In any case, the idea would be to provide subsistence support for a variety of magazines, so that editors and writers with different points of view and journalistic styles would have the same opportunity to compete for readers.

Equal access to the media: the principle is attractive, but it does have to be mediated by a committee, since there will never be paper or printing presses or distribution facilities enough for all the men and women ready and waiting to publish a magazine or to fill it with material. Nor is there ever audience enough. In the production of articles and essays, as of poems and novels, supply always outruns demand. Some selection process is necessary, and so it matters a great deal who makes the selection.

In the welfare state model, government officials or the "experts" they appoint play that part because the state owns the media. But (as the example of China's "democratic wall" suggests) there are dangers in that arrangement, and the dangers persist even if one tries to free the selection process from immediate political control. That the state should be a patron of politics and the arts is entirely sensible; the royal court once played a similar role, though on behalf of a very narrow social circle; democracy requires larger subsidies more widely distributed. That the state should be the only patron is a very bad idea.

How likely is it to finance the production of dissidence? Since its officials must in any case make a selection, we have to expect that they will look for a range of opinions and styles that includes just enough of whatever seems "interesting" and even provocative to appease liberal consciences, and as little as possible of whatever seems radical, critical, unsafe for common eyes.

I say this with some hesitation. After all, it was an official committee that selected plays for the Athenian drama festivals. It's not impossible that there could be a culture so rich and a democracy so lively that its people, through their government, would patronize works that raised the deepest questions about human life. Would even the Athenians, however, have permitted Socrates to edit a magazine? Would they (collectively) have paid for it? It seems safest to make sure that alternative patrons are available. And that means, once again, to turn from state subsidies to private gifts.

The welfare-state model is currently most popular among reformers who work in the field of electoral politics. Their favorite proposal is that the state undertake entire financial responsibility for elections and election campaigns. This would eliminate the power of individual and corporate wealth (though only in elections, not yet in the political process as a whole) and make it possible for a larger number of candidates to compete for office. Now these are exactly the right sorts of reasons for supporting a state-financed system of health care: to rule out the prerogatives of wealth and to make necessary care available to everyone.

But politics is different. It's not necessary that everyone run for office or even that everyone be able to run for office. The effect of the reforms already adopted has indeed been to multiply the number of candidates, but the advantage of that for democratic politics isn't easy to see. In the sphere of politics, in contrast, say, to medicine, our slogan should properly be: work, not welfare. It is not crucial to his recovery that a man with heart disease earn the money to pay his doctor: he has to be helped whether he can earn the money or not. But it is crucial to their election that candidates win the political and financial backing of some significant number of the people they want to represent; if they can't do that, they don't deserve to be helped.

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The effort to mobilize followers, to collect time and money, isn't merely instrumental to the campaign, so that a benevolent government might help us dispense with it and get on to the important things. It *is* the campaign. Running for office shouldn't be a matter of buying media time and advertising one's positions (or oneself), but rather of hard work in wards and precincts, close ties to unions and interest groups, years of arguing, explaining, taking positions. There is no reason for the state to provide a shortcut through all this.

Some "welfare" measures will still be necessary because of the sheer size of the modern electorate and the high costs (and therefore the limited accessibility) of the mass media. The government will have to guarantee television time, for example, to a range of candidates—or better, of parties, though it's not easy in either case to say just how this should be accomplished. But if we are concerned with the political uses of wealth, it would be far better to redistribute the wealth than to ban private gifts. For the gift is crucial to democratic politics. Indeed, we have no other way to register the intensity of our commitments. We can only vote once, and that one vote counts as much for a candidate about whom we have deep misgivings as it does for a candidate we thoroughly admire. But time and money are measurable in pieces, and so we can measure out our support. How much of that support a candidate can win is almost as important as how many votes he can win in determining his right, and also his ability, to govern.

If we can't redistribute wealth, then we will need to limit the size of political gifts (and to do so more effectively than we do today). But the picture of a politics without gifts, where government-supported candidates appear one after another on the television screen, dressed up by their government-paid public-relations experts—this is the political equivalent of a clean, well-lighted welfare state. What is missing is all the messy activity, all the individually focused, uncoordinated energy of ordinary men and women.

The public financing of candidates would also undermine the importance of parties. Political parties are like philanthropic organizations: they are instruments for collecting time and money. They have no taxing power; they are sustained by the voluntary contributions of their members and supporters; and so they must provide these people with some reason, some significant and durable reason, to contribute. A politics without parties will tend to be a politics without reasons or, at least, without reasons that effectively engage the attention of large numbers of citizens. And that leaves too much for elected officials to do, just as a welfare state without philanthropic organizations leaves too much for bureaucrats to do.

If socialism requires a lay welfare state, so it requires a citizens' politics. And both of these depend upon the gift relationship and then upon the existence of groups capable of establishing and sustaining that relationship. Conceivably, the state can spin off groups of this sort, particularly at the local level. But the bulk of them will have to be, as all political parties have to be, voluntary associations.

Come back now to the question of starting and supporting a radical magazine. It's not the case that if government funds are unavailable, we must turn immediately to a small number of immensely wealthy individuals. A range of intermediate groups—political parties, unions, churches, ethnic associations—provide the most likely set of alternative patrons. Socialism ought to multiply the number of such groups and widen the constituencies upon which they draw. There ought to be more men and women with political competence and a sense of their own effectiveness: more citizens, in the strong sense of that word. So magazines will flourish as organizational forums, just as they sometimes do today, but against the background of a livelier politics and culture: with more readers, in the strong sense of that word.

But what about a group of friends who want to start a magazine and can't find organizational support? They are really dissidents, and their opinions don't reflect those of any well-established group. What can they do? It is necessary first of all to acknowledge the possibility of failure. Not every group of friends can have a magazine. But it is important that there also be at least a possibility of success. So private resources must be available not only at

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the group but also at the individual level. In a society more egalitarian than our own, one would have to search out a somewhat larger number of individuals. Gifts might well be smaller, but there would be more people able to give. We might do without angels if we had enough resourceful men and women. I assume that dissent would still be difficult; there is no reason why it shouldn't be. But it would be a sorry socialism if the gift relationship were ruled out and dissent made to hang entirely upon one or another kind of official subsidy.

The argument requires one further step. If money can be raised, there must be a market where it can be spent. There must be typesetters, printers, and binders willing to help in the publication of opinions they dislike . . . for money. Perhaps the group of editors will include men and women with the necessary skills and with access to the necessary machines. But if it doesn't, then the cash nexus is a crucial complement to the gift relationship. Here is a new argument for market socialism and also for the maintenance, especially in the fields of politics and culture, of a petty-bourgeois economy.

Two things are required: a world of craftsmen and skilled workers, organized perhaps into cooperatives but ready to enter into commercial relations—so that they won't have to vote on the contents of the magazines they print. And a world of free entrepreneurs, the owners of bookstores and newsstands, similarly ready to display any magazine that might sell a few copies. But then, someone will argue, they will display only magazines devoted to jogging, hi-fi sets, and naked bodies. Maybe so, though there is at at least an equal danger, as in Orwell's *1984*, that state stores would do the same thing. And I suspect that an independent shopkeeper is more likely than a state official to find a little room for *Dissent*.

The petty-bourgeois economy is the natural habitat of the little magazine. It is probably fair to say that if one eliminates the first, the second won't survive for long. State subsidies, like foundation grants, can be helpful but only alongside the more dispersed resources of editors and friends, and only within the context of a market economy where products and services can be freely purchased (that is, where they don't have to be applied for). Socialists often write as if they hope to see the end of every sort of market relation. I have long thought that a mistaken vision, and the mistake seems especially clear when one focuses on the small-scale, everyday politics and culture of a socialist society.

But we would be happier, of course, if *Dissent* did not remain a little magazine but grew big, finding more and more readers. The bigger it grew, however, the greater its costs would be, and the more money we would have to raise. For political magazines do not make money, not at least until they reach a readership in the hundreds of thousands. Without a rich backer, how would a larger *Dissent* keep going?

It is certainly true that whatever variety exists among political magazines today is due chiefly to the fact that there are wealthy men and women, with different political commitments, willing to spend (and lose) their money. Such people deserve our gratitude. And yet it is not right that the expression of political views in a democracy should reflect the range of opinions among a tiny class of powerful individuals. Nor is it conceivable that if there were no such class, there would be no political magazines.

Associations of all sorts would fill the breach. There would even be groups, like the American Jewish Committee today, ready to give to the editors they selected the freedom to defend positions that many of their members disliked. They would function, that is, like philanthropic organizations, collecting money and then providing what can plausibly be called disinterested (if not necessarily warm-hearted) services.

Cultural and political freedom requires the dispersion of wealth and power. This is an important argument, but it has both an ideological and a serious form. The claim that therefore capitalism is necessary—as if wealth and power were widely dispersed today—is ideological. The claim that private resources must supplement public resources, that gifts must supplement grants, is serious. The gift relationship has flourished in many different cultures and under a wide range of economic conditions: in the primitive societies that anthropologists study, in Old Testament Israel, ancient China,

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classical Greece and Rome, feudal Europe, and so on. There is no reason why it cannot flourish also under conditions of socialist equality. It is impossible, indeed, in totalitarian states, where even donations of time and energy are suspect. In such societies the prerequisites of voluntary giving and doing don't exist.

If we imagine a society of free citizens, relatively equal or at least not radically unequal in the resources they command, there is every reason to expect a great deal of privately initiated, privately supported political and cultural activity. Of course, we also have to expect, along with the necessary development of the public sector, certain tendencies toward governmental overreach. These too have been present under a wide range of economic conditions. But that is why dissent and *Dissent* are necessary, and why we must make sure that there will always be men and women capable of bearing their costs.

Notes

[1] *New York Times* July 2, 1978.

[2] *New York Times*, July 6, 1981.

[3] *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, Richard Ellman, ed. (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 258.

[4] *The Gift*, Ian Cunnison, trans. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), p. 63.

[5] *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

[6] The quoted phrase is from *Social Work, Welfare and the State*, Noel Parry, Michael Rustin, and Carole Satyamurti, eds. (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), p. 168. □

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30 Rockefeller Plaza

EASTERN NESSTAND
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EASTERN NEWSSTAND
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Jean Bethke Elshtain

Feminism, Family, and Community

I must write a piece on feminism, family, and community. I write as someone who has been involved in the politics of the feminist movement since the early 1960s, someone who characterizes her own work as made possible in part by the intellectual ferment feminism has generated. But, as I begin, I find that the image of a strong woman, my grandmother, supplants all other visions, wipes out abstract ideologies and theoretical models. I see her instructing her grandchildren in the crafts that create things of beauty and utility to provide envelopes for our bodies, warmth for our beds, and food for our tables. I mark her pride and her intensity, her conviction that she has lived a good and a productive life. I know that what keeps the fires of her life burning is the drive to pass her heritage of wisdom, piety, and goodness on to her great-grandchildren. That my grandmother's image emerges so powerfully is appropriate. For the need to write this piece derives from my discontent with the way "the family" has been treated in much feminist and radical argumentation since the 1960s, and with the way "community," while celebrated, has remained mostly an empty term—for there is no way to create real communities out of an aggregate of "freely" choosing adults.

The term my grandmother uses to describe her people is *unsere Leute*, "our people," a people without a country but with an authentic historic identity, the Volga Germans. She could never see herself through the lens of some abstract universalism like "class"; for her, always, "peoplehood" was paramount. To Marx and his orthodox followers she and her people are "rural idiots," for they formed a peasant society and most of them remain farmers. Yet the tradition that ties these people to the land also makes them profoundly suspicious of the "progressive" force represented by capitalism. "Our people's" way of life was threaded through and through by a populist pietism—a deeply rooted animus against experts ("big shots" to my grandma), the too powerful ("Pride goeth before the fall, and some of them guys are gonna fall hard, just you wait"), and the too rich ("It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God"). This pietism cautioned against judging things by appearances only, stressed responsibility to and for one's life as a social life lived among others, advocated going the "extra mile" (the Good Samaritan parable) and tempering justice with mercy (the Prodigal Son).

None of the values of "our people" mesh neatly with the "needs" of capitalism, nor with market images of human beings; they clash at nearly every point. Yet the ties of such organic communities have been seen by those progressive movements that grew out of Enlightenment rationalism and liberal myths of historic progress as precisely what we all need to be "liberated from." The hard truth we have now come up against is, simply, this: to the extent that reformers and radicals see family and traditional community as reactionary by definition and repressive by nature, to that extent they have bought into a one-dimensional image of human beings. This is a serious charge and I intend to defend it.

First, a few reminders of the way in which the family was singled out by powerful voices

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within middle-class movements for social change—feminist, radical, "psychological"—as *the* institution most deeply implicated in the oppression of all people but of women in particular. Calls for "smashing" the family, or its dramatic transformation in order to bring it in line with a feminist or left-wing revolution abstractly conceived, helped to invite the reaction we now face. The right has been able to portray itself as the defender of family life in part because of the early and dramatic hostility of many, though not all, feminists and radicals to all traditional social forms.

The right's portrayal of feminist and radical antifamilialism is of course drastically overdrawn, but there is just enough truth to make the charges seem plausible. Most American citizens see themselves, first and foremost, as family men and women and members of communities, and much of their energy is devoted to keeping these families and communities alive. Thus far feminists and radicals have failed to provide a compelling vision of an alternative society to grip the imagination and gain the adherence of these citizens. It may be that none of this commitment to family and traditional community *should* persist, not in 1982, not according to certain ideologies. But, to repeat one of Freud's favorite quotations, "*La théorie c'est bon, mais ça n'empêche d'exister.*" (Theory is good, but it doesn't prevent things from existing.) I shall argue that things that exist—such as the family—incorporate values that implicitly challenge corporate power and antidemocratic, managerial elites, and that this potential can be strengthened.

It would be tedious to repeat in detail all the charges against the family, but a reminder is necessary. Unless we recall at least some of these charges, we will fail to appreciate the complex interaction between protest and reaction. My now-yellowed copy of *Women and Revolution*, a "newspaper of revolutionary women's liberation," dated May–June 1971, outlines in bold letters its "program" on family, education, and production:

> The institution of the family is inherently reactionary and helps to maintain the capitalist system. The family, as a socioeconomic unit, is oppressive to its members. Women are especially oppressed by the family. . . . Each nuclear family exists in isolation from the rest of society and, thus, weakens the class consciousness of the workers.

In a widely circulated essay by Laurel Limpus on "Liberation of Women: Sexual Repression and the Family," the family was declared "the central agent of repression," inculcating "both the subservience of women and sexual taboos." Married women were called dishonest "prostitutes" for, unlike real prostitutes, they were in bad faith about what they were up to. Another manifesto depicted the new mother as a pitiful creature descending into a condition of terminal social decay, imprisoned in the home, which "is perhaps the basis of all evil." The editors of *No More Fun and Games* reduced childbearing and rearing to terms of crude possession. A woman choosing motherhood signifies that she has not "achieved sufficient maturity and autonomy and is seeking a hopeless fulfillment through neurotic channels."

There were, of course, always feminists who had deep reservations about these arguments, but they were made by such influential theorists as Kate Millett, for whom the entire society was but the oppressive, patriarchal family writ large, with women cast as universal victims and an oppressed class, or by Germaine Greer, who enjoined women who would be "free" to leave their homes and families in pursuit of the untrammeled life. Orthodox Marxist feminism, according to Jane Humphries, in her critical essay "The Working-Class Family: A Marxist Perspective,"* views the family through a lens labeled "functional requisites of capital" and depicts mothering as a kind of hapless mimickry of production, the "reproduction of a future commodity labor power."

True, there were, and are, feminists of all sorts who refused to jump on the antifamilial bandwagon. But this should not obscure the

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* Humphries' essay appears in *The Family in Political Thought*, Jean Bethke Elshtain, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), pp. 197–222. The book includes an extensive bibliography of political treatments of the family.

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fact that a major thrust of early feminist rhetoric was a dramatic insistence that the family was "the enemy." Even a liberal feminist such as Betty Friedan, in her "first-stage" incarnation, referred to the home as a "comfortable concentration camp" and celebrated, as an alternative to suburban housewifery, not a transformed vision of the human community but women's absorption into the exciting world of those "able, ambitious" men who went off to the city and "kept on growing."

Feminist critics of family life were joined by a variety of (mostly male) cultural radicals. Counterculture protesters sought escape from their uptight families in drug experimentation and communal living that soon ran ashoal on its own inner contradiction—a simultaneous commitment to individual freedom (to "do your own thing") and total community. Psychological radicals found in R. D. Laing a guru who proclaimed that all human beings, having been raised in families, were "half-crazed creatures." Familial love and parental concern got redescribed by Laing as devious forms of violence. "From the moment of birth," he declared, "when the Stone Age baby confronts the twentieth-century mother, the baby is subjected to these forces of violence called love . . . ." Families were a bunch of "gangsters" and homes were sites of "reciprocal terrorism." Mocking the efforts of parents to provide security for their children, often under such difficult conditions as those depicted by Sennett and Cobb in *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, Laing denounced parental action as a debased "protection racket."

In retrospect, much of this criticism has the air of "hit and run" and is made by radicals who refused to acknowledge any of the legitimate human needs for intimacy and security imbedded and answered, however imperfectly, within the traditional family. Already weakened by market forces that eroded community ties and severed work from community life, the American family, by the 1960s, was a vulnerable target for social criticism and personal-political protest. But family critics failed to come through on what should have been an essential part of their agenda: they did not articulate viable, humane alternatives to replace what they proposed to reform or "smash." Instead, they tended to reiterate as dogma the notion that if people were no longer dependent on families, they would get together to demand radical social change.

The unhappy history of the past several decades tells a different story. What oozed into the vacuum created by the breakup of community and the breakdown of families were the forces of right-wing reaction and a bewildering smorgasbord of cults, human-potential movements, and therapeutic options for those who could afford them. The most widespread reaction to the crisis of the family is the embattled retreat embodied in such groups as the Moral Majority. It is important to remember that militant right-wing reaction did not create our current troubles; instead, human beings who were frightened by a world increasingly out of their effective control, concerned to preserve what they saw as traditional values imperiled by liberals and radicals, got caught up in an ideology that sought to return to some imagined Good Old Days when men were men, women knew their place, children kept their place, and all was well.

It would be inaccurate, and self-serving, for feminists and radicals to see all this as no more than thousands of Americans being manipulated by the right around such issues as the family. Conservatives addressed themselves forcefully (though often dishonestly) to those cultural issues posed most dramatically in the 1960s. So far, feminists and other social critics have failed to tackle the moral issues posed by the crisis in American institutions, most importantly in the family.

Another frequently sinister alternative to family and community is presented by dozens of cults and cultlike groups. The Jim Joneses of this world prey on persons who have fallen into despair or confusion. Cults moved into the vacuum created by the "thinning-out" of community and family ties, even as they further eroded those ties to preclude any outside locus for human relations. In an argument that eerily replicates radical claims that attachment to the family vitiates commitment to "the Cause," Jim Jones rejected a request by two members of his doomed cult for a Thanksgiving visit to the family of one of them in these words: "It's time for you to cut your family ties. . . . Blood

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ties are dangerous because they prevent people from being totally dedicated to the Cause." "Families are a part of the enemy system," one of Jones's henchmen declared. "They do not love you. . . . They don't understand this Cause, and therefore you cannot trust them."

Those who find *any* analytic comparison between certain sorts of radical protest and the theory and practice of cults unsavory, should reflect for a moment on the similarities between the views of the family propounded in each instance—that it is part of an oppressive structure inimical to liberation and the Cause; that it inhibits wholehearted political and social commitment; that it exists to perpetuate an "enemy" system. Then it is worth pondering the proposed solutions: creating some unspecified "higher form" of the family; forming a cult, a commune, or a postrevolutionary society, in which no one has an "exclusive" relationship with anybody; the absorption of child-rearing "functions" by everybody, or by a public bureaucracy, or by a private sector whose enlightened entrepreneurs would meet a social need and garner a profit by going into what one Marxist critic nicely dubbed the "Kentucky Fried Children" business.

Ordinary citizens see in all this yet another assault on those social forms that help their lives make sense. The presumptions that in order to have a revolutionary or feminist consciousness one must disconnect oneself from particular ties, from what Jane Addams called "the family claim," are correctly perceived by members of working-class and traditional communities as destructive of their way of life. They sometimes even recognize in such views an extension of those market forces that have nearly annihilated older forms of social existence and replaced them by atomistic ways of life. The standpoint of "possessive individualism"—a term I owe to the political theorist C. B. Macpherson—dovetails perfectly with markets and fails to consider the emotional and social needs the family continues, however fitfully, to fulfill.

For my grandmother, the "I" of the self was always a "we," located within a dense web of human ties. She could no more think of herself outside the tissue of "*unsere Leute*" than she could fly. These ties of community were altered forever by the twin forces of liberalism and capitalism, emerging historically in tandem and realizing, in practice, awesome possibilities for both good and ill unthinkable in older social formations. For women, the promises of liberalism were slow to come, including their incorporation into the reigning definition of "the person" as a being with an identity separable from that of others—whether one's spouse, one's family, or one's community. Liberal society opened up possibilities for persons to "relocate" themselves, as civil society grew more open-textured, to move away from older ties and constraints toward personal identities that are self-defined and chosen.

The ideal was that free individuals, in pursuit of self-interest, would also be mindful of higher duties as citizens of a political community. Unfortunately, the prevailing norm for public identity in liberal America has become almost indistinguishable from its predatory variant of "possessive individualism." The terms under which individuals act in the public world are thoroughly permeated by market values that undermine possibilities for a shared life of civic virtue. This free-market model, translated into feminist protest and cultural revolt, becomes either the ideology of the "how to get yours" versions of feminism or, more "radically," the ideology that proclaims all constraints on individual expression to be coercive.

So we get an ideal of nonbinding commitments, with particular appeal to the upper-middle class, the mobile, and the well-educated, served up as a radical repast. The overall effect of all this "actualizing" of selves is supposed to be a wider good, for modes of radical protest indebted to classical liberalism implicitly embrace a notion of an "invisible hand," operating to transform self-interest and personal freedom into a social benefit.

But this will not do, finally, for there is no way to make a community out of "possessive individuals." Within this frame, where the individuals are "free" only insofar as each is the sole "proprietor" of self, the only acceptable human relations are those calculated to yield maximum utility. Within such a perspective,

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all human ties, including marriage, must be construed as starkly contractual—supplanting marriage and communities as social compacts.

The social compact is a different notion from that of contract. It is inseparable from ideals of civic virtue and retains a hold on working-class, religious, and rural culture. A compact is no contingent agreement but a solemn commitment to create something "new" out of disparate elements—a family, a community, a polity—whose individual members do not remain "as before" once they become part of this social mode of existence. Within the social compact, community members, ideally, share values that are sustained by moral suasion, not enforced by coercion. Unlike social-contract theories, the compact ideal revolves around the varying needs of human beings over the span of their life cycle. Contract theory is a static view: it presents a picture of consenting, rational adults—a world in which no one is born and no one dies. Children, old people, ill and dying people who need care are nowhere to be seen.

Now, in practice, contractual society remains linked, in ways that go unacknowledged, to older notions of the social compact. In Michael Walzer's words, "What made liberalism endurable for all these years was the fact that the individualism it generated was imperfect, tempered by older restraints and loyalties, by stable patterns of local, ethnic, religious, or class relationships. An untempered liberalism would be unendurable." But that is precisely what feminist and radical protest grounded in "possessive individualism" refuses to recognize; this protest has failed to demonstrate convincingly how intimate social relations are to be sustained if individualism continues to erode the social foundations upon which individuals are nourished in the first place.

"My body, my self" is a necessary corrective when communities overwhelm the individual or stifle dissent. But the obsession with "self" that is one hallmark of much radical protest offers no opposition to the terms of market society. As more and more areas of social life are subjected to decisions made along the lines of a narrowly construed theory of policy science, it is families and the remnants of traditional communities that can preserve meanings and embody relations that cannot be settled by impersonal standards. And this is why notions of a social compact that are different from the dominant public ideology in a bureaucratic state, whether capitalist or communist, hold out the possibility of radical critique. Those feminists and radicals who have faced the fact that they have failed to gain allegiance to their cause from the very people in whose behalf their struggle is ostensibly being waged should consider this world and understand its potential for social opposition.

In the concluding section of this essay I shall draw feminism and traditional notions of family life into a mutual relation in a manner that does not see earlier terms of women's oppression as the only way to restore family life. Instead, I shall embrace a revitalized form of family life and community as one way to break the destructive hold of market images on feminist protest. If we fail in this effort, we are likely to see more of the defensive reactions of right-wing movements and the destructive possibilities of cults. My aim is to contest, not to abandon, the grounds of tradition, a terrain thus far handed over to the right.

Feminists who reject the terms of our society are in the best position empathically to assay the powerful symbols that inspire familial, religious, and community loyalties. Harry Boyte observes that "the basic theory that saw revolutionary consciousness as an abstract universalism, a rootless cosmopolitanism, and that saw anticapitalist insurgency as growing from radical deracination continues to hold sway over the left." But this world view remains willfully blind to the phenomenon, documented by social historians, that anticapitalist struggles have been waged by human beings determined to defend their particular historic identities, not by "homeless" masses in the grip of such notions as "sex-class." The Solidarity movement in Poland is animated by profoundly communal and religious values; so was Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference with its base in Southern black churches. And we could cite many other examples.

To recover what Simone Weil called our "need for roots," we must first give up the

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hollow notion that all families or religious institutions reinforce the ideology of the wider society. Only then can we set about recasting a vision of the family as central to any humane way of life. By "family" I mean the widely accepted, popular understanding of the term as having its basis in marriage and kinship, involving links between particular persons that cannot be reduced to instrumental terms. This family stands as one barrier between human beings and the flattening out of their social world under the demands of untrammeled self-interest.

Feminist protest that sought the elimination of this sphere of traditional femininity was understandable when it was a response by women to conditions of their identities that had grown problematic under the pressures of modernization and capitalism. But the end-point of this feminist argumentation, whether radical or liberal, is ironically self-defeating, for it requires that women, in the name of feminism, embrace the terms of a public life that was created by men who had rejected or devalued the world of the traditionally "feminine" with its "softer" virtues. Behold, the new woman as the old man!

An alternative to the feminist protest that seeks women's full absorption within the market society must make contact with women's traditional social sphere. Women's world arose on a template of concern and care for others. Any viable human community must have, in its ranks, an important segment devoted to the protection of vulnerable human life. That, historically, has been the mission of women. The pity is not that women reflect an ethic of social responsibility but that the public world has, for the most part, repudiated such an ethic. Rather than denying women the meaning their traditional world provided, even under conditions of male domination, feminists should move to challenge a society that downgrades female-created and -sustained values.

If it is the case, as Carol Gilligan has argued, that women have a distinctive moral "voice," emphasizing concern and responsibility for others, feminists should be among the first to preserve the sphere that makes this morality possible and to determine how best to extend its imperatives to serve a less-than-humane public world. If Gilligan learns that women now have a greater ability to identify with others, to sustain a variety of personal relationships, and locates those qualities and capacities in women's involvement with children, friends, and communities, feminists must think about what would be lost if we gave up this realm altogether in the name of an abstract ideal of liberation.

Right-wing defenses of the family can only be countered by a feminism that agrees that the family is a prerequisite for any form of social life and that a particular ideal of the family is imperative to create a more humane society. One sign of hope is the attempt by many men and women, not all of them professionals, both to sustain strong family ties and simultaneously to struggle toward more egalitarian relations between husband and wife.

The feminism I have in mind bears little resemblance to that "major shift" in thinking on the family some claim has taken place in Betty Friedan's *The Second Stage*. Friedan's vision of the family embodies an accommodation with the corporate and political structures most deeply implicated in the breakdown of family ties in the first place. The kind of family arrangement Friedan celebrates as exemplary (dual-career professionals on flexi-time, but often requiring paid help) is possible, at best, for the top 10–15 percent of the American population. For the remaining 85 percent we get the reiteration of a pretty standard liberal agenda—more day care, more reliance on social-engineering "experts," and, *mirabile dictu*, the final "transcendence" of any conflict between "self-realization" and "social good." Such sleight of hand blunts the edges of conflict and diffuses political debate. If, finally, the aims of a feminism guided by the values of current society, the needs of individuals for long-time intimate ties, and the attainment of some notion of the social good are all compatible, what has all the fuss been about?

My version of a feminist perspective that makes a case for family ties, unlike Friedan's, refuses to build either familial or feminist alternatives on the shaky sand of accommodation to the status quo. In defining the family simply as the place "you come home to," Friedan defines it out of existence. Her logic

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dictates that she put on a par with one another the swinging single in an "adult residential village"; the young couple struggling to raise their family and to make ends meet in an inflationary recession; the husband and wife, now grandparents, who have spent 40 years of their lives together; the single parent exhausted by the double responsibility for home and a job; and the four college kids who have rented a house together for the fall semester.

If a feminist case for the family is to bear any critical weight, important conflicts between popular understanding of the family and attempts by a variety of groups to redefine it in a way that accepts nearly any social arrangement human beings conjure up as "families" must not be evaded. To throw the honorable mantle "family" over every ad hoc collection of persons who happen to be under one roof at the same time is to diminish the genuine achievements of family men and women who have retained their commitments to and for one another. Feminism of the sort I propose recognizes that there is no final resolution to the twin goals of individual freedom and social good. To skip over these matters by celebrating widespread social breakdown as evidence of vital social change is to trivialize profoundly important questions.

Within the family of which I write the nourishment of humanity takes place at every point in the life cycle. This family concerns itself with those who have gone before and those who are to come after. But responsibilities for children are paramount. We know—the evidence on this score is overwhelming—that children incur an assault to their humanity if they suffer from neglect, from the uprootedness that comes from being "cared for" by no one in particular. The evidence we have of what happens to children deprived of attachments to specific adults bears out that we are talking about a prerequisite for authentic human existence.

In their understandable preoccupation with the status and role of women, feminists, until recently, were too little concerned with the impact of social change on whole families. Social feminism of the sort I propose places children in the center of its concern—children surrounded, as they need to be, by parents or their permanent, not temporary, substitutes. Unless or until this happens, the right will retain a powerful opening wedge into popular consciousness, for ordinary people love and fear for their children. The feminism I seek is not reducible to a clever strategic move; it is, instead, the reaffirmation of moral imperatives and their insertion into the heart of feminist politics.

This is a recognition Antonio Gramsci seems to have come to toward the end of his life when he wrote, in a passage of exquisite pathos:

> How many times have I wondered if it is really possible to forge links with a mass of people when one has never had strong feelings for anyone, not even one's parents; if it is possible to love a collectivity when one has not been deeply loved oneself, by individual human creatures. Hasn't this had some effect on my life as a militant, has it not tended to make me sterile and reduce my quality as a revolutionary by making everything a matter of intellect, of mere magical calculation?

My call, finally, is for a rethinking of terms that have tended to overschematize the world as one of either/ors: either traditional family life or careerism, and so on. The vision I propose opens the way to a transformed notion of community that repudiates the unacceptable poles of narcissistic self-absorption, on the one hand, and single-minded, overweening commitment to "the Cause" on the other. It sees human beings as social but not as so oversocialized that they emerge as passive reactors to external stimuli. In affirming the dignity of the human subject, beginning with the needs of children, social feminism challenges irresponsible corporate power and a politics of group self-interest, for both run roughshod over the needs of families. It indicts an economic system that denies families a living, family wage and that forces both parents into the labor force, often against the will of the woman who would prefer to be with her children but must, instead, work at a low-pay, dead-end job just to make "ends meet." The solution to this dilemma is not to join Friedan's chorus for more day care, which implicitly accepts an economic system that cannot provide decently for its families, but to challenge

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that system. Nor is this an argument against day care; it is a refusal to embrace the standard liberal agenda of more provision of social services to ameliorate the destructive effects of a socially irresponsible corporate structure.

If we dare to hope for a future, one coherent way is to articulate a vision of feminism and a radical politics that does not require that either feminism or radicalism be feared or despised by decent, ordinary people. "American history and tradition," writes Boyte,

> like that of any nation, embodies contradictions between rapaciously individualist, democratic, and authoritarian elements. To reclaim the best in America's traditions and history is to rediscover the popular democratic heritage: our nation's civic idealism, our practices of mutual aid and self-help, our religious wellsprings of social justice.

I began these reflections on feminism, family, and community by honoring the integrity of my grandmother, recalling, as I did, Virginia Woolf's prescient cry to the women of her generation that the education of their uneducated mothers and grandmothers must have had "great virtues as well as defects" and that "we should be extremely foolish if we threw away the results of that education or gave up the knowledge that we have obtained from it for any bribe or decoration whatever." A second luminescent image also asks that I "attend" to it. Several months ago, I read a remarkable book by a moral philosopher, Philip Hallie, who told the story of the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon and the "goodness" that happened there during one of the darkest moments in Western history. The entire community committed itself to resist the Nazi occupation of France by rescuing Jews, giving them food, shelter, and safety at risk to their own lives, providing them with false identity cards and helping them escape into neutral Switzerland. It was a quiet struggle. There were no macho heroes, no Maquis members engaged in guerrilla tactics. There was instead, waged by these pietists, many of them pacifist, a struggle that "began and ended in the privacy of people's homes." Decisions that were turning points in the struggle took place in kitchens. Males did not dictate these decisions; women and children were centrally involved. "A kitchen is a private, intimate place; in it there are no uniforms, no buttons or badges symbolizing public duty and public support," writes Hallie. Yet through this "kitchen struggle" a few thousand human beings were changed, irrevocably, by their resistance, as they spared hundreds the ultimate terror of nazism.

Orthodoxies holding that this village and its families, like all villages and families, are merely performing decreed functions for the larger social order cannot explain Le Chambon. For there, and at great risk to themselves, Le Chambon's men, women, and children did just the opposite. Let Freud have the final word: "*La théorie c'est bon, mais ça n'empêche d'exister.*" □

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Josephine Hendin

The *New Yorker* as Cultural Ideal

The *New Yorker* reigns among us as an arbiter of taste. Since the intellectual monthlies and quarterlies lost authority, and the youth culture faded as a trend-setting force, the *New Yorker* has emerged as a model of what is "best." Its style is enshrined in freshman writing classes throughout the country, its fiction is emulated by aspiring writers, its impact is evident on recent books. In its ability to reveal even ugly social facts with an unruffled neatness, the *New Yorker* has demonstrated that it is possible to face *anything* with style. With its elegance of observation and voice, it has set a standard of what it means to be "civilized." How can there be anything pernicious in that?

In politics the *New Yorker* is liberal but not democratic. It is inclusive, or tries to be, in acknowledging social issues, but it remains exclusive in its response, usually limiting its treatment to dense description of a problem. This practice has produced mixed results. For example, Elizabeth Drew's *Portrait of an Election: The 1980 Presidential Campaign*, originally published in the *New Yorker*, is a massive accumulation of detail that produces a valuable record. But it also reveals the disproportions that can be produced by facts without an authorial intelligence to distinguish the trivial from the significant.

In cultivating refinement of observation, the *New Yorker* has tended to treat all social issues as "documentaries." Praised for its treatment of ecology, the *New Yorker* has come to endangered environments as a cameraman selecting visually lovely surfaces. For example, John McPhee's *The Pine Barrens*, reissued recently, beautifully evokes that wilderness in New Jersey where backwoodsmen lead 19th-century lives. Elegiac about a world doomed by ever-encroaching builders and army bases, McPhee celebrates its quaintness but discloses little of its will or struggle to survive. It comes as a surprise when he notes in an afterword that these "simple" people have won preserve status and governmental protection for their land. McPhee turns from this large success to a small anecdote: a Barrens man found an abandoned army jeep, then rebuilt it only to find that, when he got it running, the army reclaimed it. Such bits of local color are dressed up and offered as if they must have large meanings. If this is environmentalism at all, it is of an extremely soft sort, one more at home with nostalgia than reform.

The *New Yorker* approach has produced memorable panoramas, but not a politics to be taken seriously. Jonathan Schell's portentous *The Fate of the Earth* illustrates how disabling the *New Yorker* approach can be. Taking an activist issue—the need for nuclear disarmament—Schell treats it in apolitical terms. His first essay offers a powerful "documentary" of the possible impact of nuclear war: the end of the world. Oracular in style but brilliant in detailing a landscape of devastation, this essay is a valuable addition to the literature of apocalypse. Yet its sequels show how the *New Yorker* mystique weakens even so fine an effort.

A long meditation on the meaning of extinction, Schell's second essay uses an accretion of minute points as a barricade against the volatility of his own subject. Have we the right, he asks, to prevent fetuses as yet unconceived from being born? Is man worth saving? The logic of his response is tortuous:

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> We cannot . . . say in any simple or unqualified sense that the end of the world is bad and its continuation good, because mankind is not in itself good or evil but is the source of both. . . . Who would miss human life if they extinguished it? To which the only honest answer is: nobody.

In his third essay, Schell yields his subject to an illusion of harmony. He calls for total nuclear and conventional disarmament, global religious tolerance, the abandonment of the nation-state, claiming "love, a spiritual energy that the human heart can pit against the physical energy released from the heart of matter, can create, cherish, and safeguard what extinction would destroy and shut up in nothingness." How bring about these amazing results? Begin, Schell tells us, by calling up a friend!

From the symbolism of apocalypse, Schell glides to the symbolism of utopia. To give no more than passing reference to how we negotiate the distance between the two, to acknowledge so scantily the vast world in between, where we must continue to live, is to spin us between the unthinkable and the unreal. It is not politics.

For we are not asked to think about those vulgar economic and political issues that play a role in the nuclear industry, nor must we consider solutions to a problem that can be resolved only through political and economic processes. Finding in apocalypse/utopia an escape to the tragic and comic poles of simplicity, Schell leaves us with a nostalgic flaccidity, our hearts aglow with rectitude, at once disarmed and dismayed.

How explain this disabling mixture of reflectiveness and naiveté, pretentiousness and simplemindedness? The *New Yorker* mystique shows us the harshest truth, yet evades it; gets "involved" yet remains detached. Such paradoxes may flow from the extent to which the *New Yorker*'s approach to political and social issues derives less from a serious engagement with the world than from a narrow esthetic valuing neatness above all. In this esthetic, an issue is something that can be defined frontally, visually, without turbulence or depth. Social truth must inevitably become only "factual" and "scenic." Veteran staff writer Brendan Gill writes in *Here at The New Yorker* that the tone of the magazine was set by James Thurber and E. B. White, who were "enemies of complexity, wherever it might be found, whether in civil bureaucracy or in the bureaucracy of corporations. Machinery of any size above the pencil sharpener baffled them; and so did domestic crises, no matter how small." Wry and charming as it may be, this attitude, if permitted to affect the treatment of serious issues, can only result in an evasion of volatile social problems through a stance of wistful comedy.

Argument, controversy, social analysis—the loose ends that make up intellectual life are ruled out by a mystique that prompts us to confront large issues as spectators and not participants. Other magazines may print rebuttals or protesting letters; the *New Yorker* prints the linguistic gaffes of other magazines. If it feels obliged to acknowledge "big" subjects, it resists the challenge they represent. When the *New Yorker* printed essays by Hannah Arendt about the Eichmann case that contained highly controversial charges against European Jewish institutions, the magazine refused the discomforts of controversy. As Irving Howe wrote:

> The *New Yorker* speaks out *ex cathedra* upon occasion: it recognizes the presence of History: and that, one gathers, is that. Hiroshima—John Hersey. Negroes—James Baldwin. Jews—Hannah Arendt. The magazine secures what it takes to be the leading authority or the most interesting writer (but alas, the two are not always the same) to work up a subject; and there it stops. . . . The *New Yorker* will not accept in its columns the refutations of highly responsible and scholarly opponents of Miss Arendt . . . scholars who have worked their way through—as it is not clear that Miss Arendt has—the primary sources in Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew. As far as the *New Yorker* is concerned, Miss Arendt has the first, last and only word. One would surmise that its editors regard Miss Arendt's articles as Literature, quite as they might regard Baldwin's. A terrific piece, a great story: you don't argue with literature.

The *New Yorker* mystique calls us to the salvations of superiority. It offers the illusion that there is a vantage point, Olympian and pristine, that permits us to see difficulties while

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keeping a cool distance. Its noblesse oblige is mostly noblesse.

One searches for a deeper humanity in the *New Yorker*'s approach to people, hoping that in its biographical discourse, accumulating the details of individual life will narrow the distance between observer and observed. But its "Profiles" also reflect a disabling detachment. Susan Sheehan's *Welfare Mother* renders the life of "Mrs. Santana" not as an experience of poverty and its afflictions, but as a spectacle. Unlike Oscar Lewis in *La Vida*, Mrs. Sheehan does not permit her subject to speak for herself, but shapes the scenes of her life into a vision of poverty as a supple surface from which anguish and despair have been rubbed away. She has interviewed "Mrs. Santana" for two and a-half years and seen enough to know when her husband goes to bed clothed, yet she never offers more than a shallow description of her feelings.

Of the value of her prolonged contact, Mrs. Sheehan writes: "The account I got from Mrs. Santana of Mr. Santana's marital infidelities in late 1974 was far more entertaining and bawdy than the account I got from her in the spring of 1973." She describes Mrs. Santana as warm, trusting, simple—the clichés common to descriptions of the poor. Mrs. Santana stands flat as a stereotype amid her beautifully described worn upholstery. Such depersonalization calls into question more than the gap between visibility and intelligibility. What is the attitude toward people in the *New Yorker*'s biographies? What is the relation between reporter and subject?

Mrs. Santana proudly introduced Mrs. Sheehan to her friends as "the writer who is writing the story of my life." Mrs. Sheehan (who had difficulty finding a cooperative subject) was grateful for Mrs. Santana, whose trust was "not so much won as freely given," and who was grateful for her attention. Mrs. Santana could not read Mrs. Sheehan's notes. Knowing that Mrs. Santana, hardly a *New Yorker* reader, would never find the Profile on her own, Mrs. Sheehan clearly never intended to show her the results of her long hospitality. "Knowing that Mrs. Santana wouldn't read the Profile gave me the freedom to write about her exactly as I wanted to, without having to worry about causing her pain." Yet Mrs. Santana had clearly expected to be written about and to see the results. Mrs. Sheehan behaved as though the story had never been written. When challenged whether this did not upset Mrs. Santana, Mrs. Sheehan tells us: " 'No,' I said with conviction. So few of the plans Mrs. Santana made were ever carried out that she would scarcely expect me to write something simply because I had set out to write it." But surely even the poorest among us know the sting of disappointment. To so dismiss such feelings brings us close to exploitation.

Professing concern for a more recent subject, "Sylvia Frumkin," who is insane, Mrs. Sheehan expresses her affection by introducing us to Miss Frumkin in the sort of scene we encounter in pornography: a woman taking a midnight bath.

> A few days earlier, [Sylvia Frumkin] had had her hair cut and shaped in a bowl style, which she found especially becoming, and her spirits were high. She washed her brown hair with shampoo and also with red mouthwash. Some years earlier, she had tinted her hair red and had liked the way it looked. . . . She imagined that the red mouthwash would somehow be absorbed into her scalp and make her hair red permanently. Miss Frumkin felt so cheerful about her new haircut that she suddenly thought she was Lori Lemaris, the mermaid whom Clark Kent had met in college and had fallen in love with in the old "Superman" comics. She blew bubbles into the water.
>
> After a few minutes of contented frolicking, Miss Frumkin stepped out of the tub.

The *New Yorker*'s superiority to disorder helps distance us from this woman. Minute observation, far from bringing us closer, reminds us how remote from her we are; she becomes a curio of Mrs. Sheehan's prose. William James found connection to patients met in his asylum, recalling once

> . . . a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic. . . . This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. *That shape am I*, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him.

Biographical discourse can, less harrowingly, bring us toward a recognition of kinship,

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even as it clarifies our individuality. But for Mrs. Sheehan, disorder is the province of *others*. "I'm the only person I know who hasn't seen a therapist or psychiatrist," she told a *New York Times* interviewer. Her book introduces us to vanities of self-control, to the assumption of infinite right of entry to the bedroom and bathroom of others. Anything one finds there can be reduced to a fastidious anecdote.

The emphasis on scene and spectacle are disabling factors when more is attempted than simply telling us "what it's like" to be someone else. Janet Malcolm's *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession*, proclaims itself as "magisterial . . . an exploration of the paths of psychoanalytic theory, practice and influence since Freud." Miss Malcolm's book grew out of a *New Yorker* series on a young Freudian analyst, "Dr. Aaron Green"; it jumps in no particular order from Green to Freud to snippets of Freudian theory, all clearly meant as an evaluation of a theory and its practitioners.

Miss Malcolm rests her book on the concept of transference. "The phenomenon of transference—how we all invent each other according to early blueprints—was Freud's most original and radical discovery," she declares in the authoritative tone so favored in the *New Yorker*. But it is generally agreed that opening up unconscious processes, recognizing their impact on behavior and their expression in a variety of ways—of which dreams and not transference are the most radical—were Freud's major discoveries. Miss Malcolm believes "transference" means that no human relation is based on people as they are, since all our relations are only products of distorted perceptions from the past. But "transference" is a technical term, strictly limited to the unique relationship between a patient and a psychoanalyst who deliberately eschews the right to "be himself" so as to permit the patient to make of him what the patient will.

Miss Malcolm is clearly less interested in theory than in psychoanalysis as a social scene. Until she met Green, she had tried and failed to penetrate the social veneer of psychoanalysts she interviewed.

> With Aaron Green, however, things were different from the start. He subtly deferred to me, he tried to impress me. He was the patient and I was the doctor; he was the student and I was the teacher. To put it in psychoanalytic language, the transference valence of the journalist was here greater than that of the analyst.

What arrests Miss Malcolm's attention is where the power balance tips. She uses analytic language colloquially, assimilating it into her own interest in the social interplay of vulnerability and power, intimacy and detachment, as they converge in the psychoanalytic "situation."

Green, a troubled young man filled with nonspecific anger toward himself and his colleagues, is eager to talk. Miss Malcolm elaborates on transference and counter-transference as the play of eroticized feelings of vulnerability and power between male analysts and their female patients. The analyst and the patient, in Miss Malcolm's view, inevitably desire each other. If the analyst yields to this desire, he gratifies the patient's need to be loved and to prevail over the ethical standards of his profession, which forbid involvement. If he silently resists his desire, he may be professionally correct but is, Miss Malcolm implies, a coward. The analyst's only way out is presumably romantic frustration: he must confess both his love and his determination to love honor more. As she plays doctor to Green, Miss Malcolm gives herself another choice. When Green, having confessed his vulnerabilities, confesses his fantasy of having a beautiful female body, she needles him with his fear: "Somehow," she coolly remarks, "that doesn't surprise me about you."

Miss Malcolm has attempted an evaluation of a profession apparently equipped with the conviction, as evident in the title, that its task is "impossible." Any reasonable standard of intellectual fairness compels the question of why Green, a loner among his colleagues at a small, highly orthodox institute, should be considered typical of an entire profession. She simply tells us she chose Green because he permitted her "valence" to prevail over his. The issue of fair representation seems not to have come up.

The *New Yorker* mode of biographical sketching enables distortions of the meaning, density and scale of human behavior. Misuse of

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the magisterial voice sustains the illusion that complexities of character and theory can be flattened by fiat. The exploitative quality of relationships in such accounts serves to misrepresent human encounters as efforts to skim whatever serves one's purpose from another's life and work. Ultimately the richness of character is narrowed to the question of who has greater "valence," and the outcomes of life are misrepresented by the triumph of an invulnerable voice over the vulnerability of human nature.

The *New Yorker* mystique permits us to believe we are concerned with others while treating their lives from a position of detachment, voyeurism, or even hostility. It exploits the lives of those "in charge" to find the "secret" of their influence, and it exploits the damaged, the poor, the insane for their grotesquerie. Humankind divides into two simple camps: the elect of sophisticated observers and the damned who do the work of living for them.

How we imagine our lives is as important as how we think about them and get on with each other. The *New Yorker* mystique has excised large patches of reality as a subject of fiction. It sets fiction against the deeply complex or urgently problematic. Donald Barthelme's stories often ridicule complexity, leveling an armory of stylistic devices against that burdensome intellectual baggage often seen as mere junk. More frequently, the *New Yorker* simplifies life by eliminating tragedy, violence, or raw conflict. In style, its fiction usually eschews sharp climax or tight denouement for "atmosphere." Muted emotional states, genteel confrontation, soft discontents in a framework of a savored and almost celebratory sadness distinguish most *New Yorker* stories. Within this spectrum, they sometimes achieve excellence, most notably in the fiction of John Cheever and John Updike. But one has only to see the far greater depth of Updike's novels to realize how little his abilities have been challenged by the *New Yorker* format.

The *New Yorker* mystique draws us to a sophistication that would surpass disorder. The detachment, simplification, and reductiveness that characterize its political and biographical discourse surface in its fiction as a collapse of anger and anxiety in a saving monotony. And this elegance of surface, suppressing discord, is more than a style. It sustains the illusion that sophistication and detachment can be shelters against the storminess of urban life. To be civilized—such is the *New Yorker* view—is to be wry and unruffled in a world requiring little more than an ability to find the best possible vantage point from which to look down upon the panorama of life. To be "saved" is to be of the elect who know how to be amused even as they wink their acknowledgment that troubles exist. To love is to love primarily one's own eyes.

Refinements of wit and observation have an obvious appeal and are not inherently blameworthy. They only become so when they falsify reality. In avoiding the problematic while seeming to deal with it, the *New Yorker* mystique does us a disservice. It denies, even as it appears to confirm, how vulnerable we are. The *New Yorker* forces us to measure the distance between its style of elegance and the seriousness and passion of reality. Its high elegance and magisterial voice coerce belief. It declares its view of disagreement by eliminating it from its pages. To protest is grubby.

Has the *New Yorker* read us, even as we have read it? Has its mystique blossomed on our superficiality? Do its moral evasions call attention to our own? Its refined enervation of voice is a literary Valium for our anxiety. As Saul Bellow has suggested many years ago, its illusory clarity speaks to our need for security and our inability to locate or to prize a deeper coherence. If its mystique permits us to believe we are being "educated" when we are only being entertained or reassured, it nevertheless soothes the fear that much of urban experience has become too frightening to face. The controlled surface of the magazine feeds our hunger for order, and assures us of our membership in an elite of the self-possessed. Its soft liberalism and autocracy of voice lend a glow of good taste to our disabling confusions. The *New Yorker* has emerged as an ideal of what it means to be "civilized." But is this the best our culture can do? □

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Robert Lekachman

Socialism Reconsidered: A View from Yugoslavia

When queried by the *New York Times*' John Oakes, Milovan Djilas, age 71, readily conceded that "Socialism is not so clear to me today as when I was young." It is an appealing feature of the Yugoslav version of communism that it is possible for good Communists to question the central arrangements of the Yugoslav state and economy. The latest example of such a reexamination is a major study by Branko Horvat,* Yugoslavia's best-known economist in the Western world. Horvat, a resident in good standing of his own country, nevertheless is able to treat critically the Yugoslav experiment in a self-managed economy.

Branko Horvat combines rare mastery of Marxist and bourgeois social thought. He has actively participated in formulating the theory and practice of his country's continuing experiment in worker self-management. His is no recent faith: "Ever since my class left the secondary school of a small provincial town in Croatia to join the partisans in the Yugoslav Revolution, socialism has been my predominant concern."

It is easy to believe that "this book represents a life's work." For in admirably clear English prose (Horvat's, not a translator's), he has examined, *inter alia*, contemporary capitalism, Soviet socialism, which he terms "etatism," and his favored alternative, self-governing socialism. His categories are Marxist, his approach is historical and analytical and his erudition impressive. Freighted as the text is with scholarly references and statistical evidence, its running refrain is the set of wistful queries that afflict democratic socialists: Why haven't manual workers in advanced bourgeois democracies developed revolutionary consciousness? Why has the state in the Soviet Union so embarrassingly neglected to wither away? Why have not the internal contradictions of capitalism intensified to the point of crisis? What distinguishes Dutch or Swedish social democracy from veritable socialism? What, finally, *is* socialism late in this century?

The bulk of Horvat's meditation upon such themes is embedded in hundreds of pages of sophisticated inspection of contemporary capitalism and its rival, the politically repressive Soviet bloc. The latter has betrayed the promises of Marxism in the course of cynical claims to fulfill them. Soviet striving for legitimacy as the heir of Marx and Engels encounters mounting incredulity among ordinary Russians. Capitalism has done rather better. It has won, if not the allegiance, at minimum the acquiescence of a proletariat increasingly garbed in white rather than blue collars. The reasons for this success are familiar. First in importance have been rising standards of life and an accompanying wide dispersion of consumer goods. Nearly as significant has been adroit manipulation of ideological symbols, above all the portrait of America as the land of unlimited opportunity. Horvat might well have recalled Werner Sombart's 1906 response to the question, Why is there no socialism in America? Sombart, something of a Marxist at the time, pungently identified the culprits as roast beef and apple pie.

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* *The Political Economy of Socialism*, by Branko Horvat. White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe. 671 pp. $35.00.

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This is to say that capitalism has been able to damage, if not quite destroy, the class solidarity essential to the Marxist account of the evolution of capitalism into socialism. My own City of New York University students, mostly working-class, seek as rapidly as possible to become middle-class accountants, business managers, and, in smaller numbers, doctors and lawyers. Although as members of the labor force many of them belong to unions, their membership tends to be reluctant and their valuation of unions exceedingly low.

Horvat does not disparage bourgeois civil liberties but, like many other critics of market capitalism, he emphasizes their limitations. Above all these are the consequences of the fraternal embrace between the mass media and the possessors of corporate or individual wealth. Trade unions publish newspapers that their members in large numbers discard unread. Periodicals like *Dissent* stuff the mailboxes of the converted. Books like Charles Lindblom's devastating critique of corporate dominion of American society, *Politics and Markets*, do get published; but they rarely appear on best-seller lists. Americans, even our intellectuals, are immersed in the mass media, above all television. The media not only soften or exclude sharp critics, they also present unemployment, noxious chemical dumps, industrial accidents, unsafe products, and so on as isolated events, innocent of systematic explanation. When, as in an occasional Bill Moyers documentary, the plight of recession casualties is effectively portrayed, the most that the program is prepared to do is suggest that some policies of a particular president and Congress are unfair.

To a remarkable degree, neoconservatives in the Irving Kristol camp have managed to portray themselves as a valiant minority beleaguered by intellectual paladins of the left safely holed up in universities. As Arnold Beichman, a member in good standing, argued on the hospitable editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, Marxists are in the process of "taking over" social science departments in numerous universities. As veterans of the academy can readily agree, most university teachers are conservative souls. Many, notably economists, law school drillmasters, scientists, and business school types are active, appropriately rewarded allies of the corporate community. My own Columbia College class has just celebrated its 40th reunion. The alumni of this once mildly radical campus as undergraduates were 40 percent Republican, 37 percent Democratic, and 23 percent other. Four decades onward, the figures are 56 percent Republican, 35 percent Democratic, and a mere 9 percent other. More than two-thirds of the group are "favorably inclined or neutral toward the present administration." So much for the lingering influence of Rex Tugwell, Robert Lynd, and a few other dangerous radicals.

As Benjamin Stein has complained in *The View from Sunset Boulevard*, individual businessmen are quite often the villains of TV melodramas. The masters of multinational corporations figure unflatteringly in the best-selling thrillers of Robert Ludlum. Stein misses the significant point. These lurid tales are understood by their viewers and readers as fables, at most anecdotes about the failings of corporate leaders upon whom we must all rely for jobs and a bountiful cornucopia of processed foods, aids to health and beauty, and the very programs in which they evilly conspire against the public weal.

FOR HORVAT, capitalism is defective not only because it debases the culture in which the populace is enmeshed, but also because it is inefficient. Repetitive business cycles threaten the jobs and incomes of all but the most prosperous. In severe episodes like the current minidepression, not even the affluent are exempt from financial damage. Capitalism wastes resources—idle men and women and shuttered plants, during cyclical downturns. During expansions, it misallocates resources, directing investment without coherent direction toward the trivial and even biologically hurtful. Things were bad in Veblen's day; they are worse in Ronald Reagan's America.

Bad enough. But Horvat's gravest indictment of capitalism is political. Hierarchy in factories and offices deprives workers of control over their time and product. Political hierarchies, those of the political parties, rob

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citizens of their birthright as political animals and alienate them from the processes of formal democracy. In the United States, where the process appears to be most advanced, only half those eligible have bothered to vote in recent presidential contests. By Horvat's telling, for all the legal freedoms enjoyed by Americans (and, once again, neither Horvat nor I deny their importance), they have lost control over their destinies. Alienated from work and politics, they live incomplete existences as manipulated consumers.

Although I do not seriously quarrel with this bill of particulars, I am inclined to enter one caveat, concerning the firmness of the business grip on public consciousness and behavior. As Daniel Bell, echoing Joseph Schumpeter, has argued, capitalism as a creed is singularly devoid of spiritual or philosophical sanction. Its traditional emphasis upon self-interest as the engine of economic progress leads directly to the speculation that popular attachment to capitalism is no deeper than popular perceptions that one's financial welfare is promoted by uninhibited scramble for individual wealth.*

One must wonder about the political consequences of slow or zero growth, persistently high unemployment, declining real estate values, diminishing prospects for upward occupational mobility, and rates of business bankruptcy unequaled since the 1930s. This indeed is the first generation since the Great Depression of that decade, in which the sons and daughters of the middle class confront the serious prospect of downward occupational, financial, and social mobility.

Although Horvat's indictment of capitalism is for the most part familiar, it is instructive both for the skill with which the evidence is marshaled and the Marxist perspective within which he interprets his data. On the Soviet bloc, Horvat is even more illuminating. His verdict upon the political repression and the dreary cultural milieu that drive Russians to drink is scathing. As Horvat compares capitalism, American-style, and Soviet etatism, the capitalist citizen enjoys his freedom from political repression at the price of endemic unemployment, cultural degradation, political alienation, and inadequate protection against the disasters of illness, disability, and old age. Horvat admits that West Europeans and Scandinavians take better care of their casualties than do Americans. By world-class capitalist criteria, the United States is a backward society, apparently resolved to march even more determinedly to the rear.

At the price of political repression, intrusive bureaucracy, and heavy doses of official propaganda, the Soviet citizen is guaranteed some sort of job, free medical care, and low rent. Despite these important distinctions between life in capitalist America and etatist Russia, Horvat identifies important parallels between the two systems. For one thing, Soviet workers are as alienated from their jobs as Americans. For another, the Soviet citizen no more controls his personal and political destiny than do American victims of unemployment and curtailed welfare, Medicaid, and unemployment benefits. Moreover, afflicted Americans thus far at least seem to be as apathetic or fatalistic about their situation as politically repressed Russians. Television's laid-off steelworkers, evicted public-housing tenants, terminated welfare clients, and threatened pensioners seldom identify their tormentors, let alone contemplate organized action against them.

The etatism of the Soviet Union, according to Horvat's definition, combines central planning, complicated bureaucracy, class stratification at least as pronounced as its parallel in capitalist societies, substantial inequality of income, and reiterated demands that the Soviet public accept this mixture as genuine socialism. Inequality takes the shape in the Soviet Union of access to special stores, hospitals, universities, recreation, and housing. Capitalism's upper stratum of the affluent is matched by the privileged bureaucrats of etatism, Djilas's new class.

Workplace alienation is epitomized for Horvat by the description of life as a milling

* This vulgar legitimation of capitalism explains the intellectually pathetic efforts of George Gilder (*Wealth and Poverty*) and Michael Novak (*The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*) to invent religious justifications for the pursuit of individual profit.

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operator in a tractor factory by the Hungarian poet Miklós Harasti:

> In every place of work . . . *them* means the same thing: the management, those who give the orders and make the decisions, employ labour and pay wages, the men and their agents who are in charge—who remain inaccessible even when they cross our field of vision . . . *them* transcends the walls of the factory and encompasses everything which is above, far away, outside the power of whoever is speaking. *Them* are all those upon whom he depends in an elusive and indefinable way: those from whom he receives this or that: by whom he is ordered about . . . officials from organizations, politicians, television producers, doctors, policemen or officials at the football ground. . . . dropping *them* is the first sign that someone really wants to start climbing the ladder.

No wonder that, according to Soviet sociologists, approximately the same percentage of Soviet as capitalist parents hope that their children will become neither workers nor peasants.

Horvat judges that the Soviet etatist society is, if anything, even more sterile than its capitalist counterpart, because the heavy hand that the cultural bureaucracy places upon films, periodicals, television, theater, and music generates predictably dull and predictable artifacts and, into the bargain, cripples high culture.

One can quarrel with Horvat's conclusion that etatsm in spite of enormous flaws, cruelties, and sheer technical incompetence has been comparatively successful in maintaining economic growth and rising living standards. On the contrary, mounting evidence shows that in the Soviet Union longevity is declining, infant mortality rising, alcoholism at crisis levels, and the agricultural sector an utter mess. As a result, average Soviet incomes probably have been for several years declining, a phenomenon paralleled by recent American experience.

To my taste, Horvat is somewhat more generous in his assessment of etatist societies and somewhat more critical of Western capitalism than his own data justify. Nevertheless, it is easy to concur in his general conclusion that both capitalism and etatism are gravely flawed social, cultural, political, and even economic arrangements. For any Marxist, there is a special sadness in the dispiriting evolution of Soviet tyranny and its utter departure from the spirit of socialism.

Horvat's explanation of that failure is Menshevik. Imperial Russia required a bourgeois revolution before it could hope to achieve socialism, the very view once briefly held by Trotsky. To put the issue somewhat differently, genuine socialism requires that working-class consciousness rise to an appropriate level of insight and sophistication. In 1917, the consciousness of Russia's small industrial proletariat had not ascended to the bourgeois stage, let alone to the next and higher level of socialism. Lenin used Russian backwardness as justification for the leading role of a revolutionary vanguard, the Communist party, as an essential exercise in the tuition of ideologically retarded workers and utterly benighted peasants. That tuition has been protracted over more than half a century with not the slightest sign that the omnipotent Soviet party ever intends to loosen its grip on the lives of ordinary citizens.

How much better if history had allowed revolution to arrive initially in England or Germany, as Marx had hoped! After World War I, Horvat suggests, German conditions for socialist revolution were favorable, but effective leadership was absent. Russian conditions were much less promising, but the Bolsheviks were directed by Lenin. If only Lenin had been German, the history of socialism might have taken a sharply different direction.

II

Horvat remains true to the socialist faith. He denies that Russian experience discredits the ideal of a better society and refuses to accept Sweden as a fair approximation of socialism. Sweden provides ingenious and generous social benefits, distributes income more nearly equally, in all probability, than any other country in either political bloc, and encourages experiments in worker participation more extensive and varied than any place else on the globe except Yugoslavia. What else does Horvat want? To what model of social and political

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organization does his vision of socialism correspond?

To answer these and related questions, it is well to recall the essence of Horvat's indictment of etatism and capitalism: both systems treat human beings as objects. Etatism manipulates its victims by a combination of bureaucracy and outright repression. Capitalism fragments life between work and leisure and turns men and women into passive, manipulated consumers of goods, services, culture, and politicians.

Socialism then is above all a matter of individual autonomy, of liberation from all varieties of repression and manipulation by elites. Horvat echoes Marx's hope that socialism will at last permit us all to be truly human. The words are glorious. Their translation in the economic sphere requires universal self-management of offices, factories, university departments, and all the other places in which work is performed. Inevitably there are complications. Resources and credit must somehow and by somebody be allocated. The structure of wages within an enterprise may be subject to self-determination but the total must bear a relation to the larger community's resources. Someone must divide a nation's resources between investment and consumption.

None of these intricate relationships need exclude the feasibility at the plant level of minute control by workers over job assignments, schedules, product designs, and supervisor selection. And—crucial point—ownership should reside in an enterprise's workers, not in the state. One may nevertheless question the design's workability. The best of plans go awry. It is never easy to handle unexpected surpluses or unanticipated shortfalls of output. Nor will rivalries among worker-controlled units easily yield to sweet-tempered consensus. Since Horvat relies, like such socialist predecessors as Oskar Lange, upon the market to allocate resources efficiently, losers as well as winners will emerge from socialist competition. What is to be done with the losers? Horvat deploys an ingenious array of agencies, including a wage arbitration board, a development fund, and assorted financing bodies, to deal with such difficulties; but, if one consequence is predictable, the tension between central planning and local self-determination will be persistent and acute.

Yet these are not the most important barriers to the success of a self-managed economy. Its success depends above all upon the willingness of ordinary workers to assume the responsibility Horvat would offer them. Will they attend frequent meetings, scrutinize dull reports, surmount the temptations of cronyism in electing managers, forgo immediate wage improvements the better to finance new equipment, and esteem these burdens as an acceptable price for the fulfilling joys of full participation in daily labor?

Horvat's personal experience of self-management has been discouraging. Although, as he emphasizes, Yugoslavia has uniquely experienced capitalism (1911–40), etatism (1940–54), and primitive self-management since then, the actual practice of unit autonomy resembles the behavior of the highly educated university group that figures in the following poignant passage. If their consciousness is so low, what hope for the proletariat?

> Everyone is eager to decide, but no one is willing to assume responsibility. I became aware of this fact by studying the behavior of my own council, which consisted of highly educated people. On several occasions, the council tried to force me to undertake (or not to undertake) certain action when I knew definitely that this would be harmful to the institution. After I had failed to persuade the council to accept my proposals, I offered to carry out the decision of the majority under the condition that the council assume responsibility for the outcome and that the work community be informed about this in advance. I thought this was a fair deal and was quite surprised when my offer provoked an outburst of discontent. I was told that the council may make any decision whatever and that the director is obliged to carry it out at his own risk. My subsequent offer to resign was decried as blackmail.

This, concedes Horvat, "was not an isolated episode. I came to the conclusion that inherited authoritarian attitudes are so deeply ingrained that they are unconsciously carried into self-management."

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Alternative explanations of this episode are no doubt available from members of Horvat's unit, but his general point, made at considerable length, is that in contemporary Yugoslav experience self-management is severely damaged by time-wasting discussion, violation of organizational principles, misconceptions about the location of authority, misconceived efforts at justice, misplaced solidarity, the impossibility of separating political and administrative action, multiplication of conflicts, misuse of democratic procedures to further private interests and, finally, the twin pitfalls of etatism and inefficiency.

Quite a list. A skeptic would be hard-pressed to lengthen it. Horvat's hope of progress toward better versions of self-management hinges upon a veritable transformation of consciousness likely to occur, if at all, in a generation. He remains cheerful because he believes that human needs rise in step with material progress. At this decisive juncture, Horvat relies upon the authority of Abraham Maslow, who has argued the case for a hierarchy of human needs. These are initially physiological requirements for water, food, and sex. One step higher is the search for individual safety. Then emerge "affective needs of belonging and love." As these are gratified, men and women feel "the need for self-respect and for self-esteem." At the summit of the hierarchy is human yearning completely to fulfill one's potentialities: "What a man *can* be, he *must* be" (emphasis in original).

Even if we set aside the shaky quality of Maslow's research and argument, there is, alas, a glaring weakness in any claim that an upward path from physiological gratification to "self-actualization" is historically preordained or even probable. Declining standards of life in both capitalist America and etatist Russia, if long continued, will push workers down the hierarchy of needs rather than upward toward full human potentiality. High unemployment diminishes self-esteem, imperils individual safety as crime rates soar, and focuses attention upon the very struggle for subsistence at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Because Horvat retains the 19th-century optimism of Karl Marx, he fails seriously to contemplate such dreary possibilities of global economic malaise.

I HAVE THUS FAR neglected the vital political complement to Horvat's economic prospectus. He detests the party domination characteristic of etatism and admires parliamentary arrangements, written constitutions (remember when the 1936 Soviet constitution was hailed by naive radicals as the most democratic in the world?), and guarantees of individual liberties. In lesser or greater degrees, these all exist in Western democracies. But these democracies are all defaced by the existence of political parties that Horvat likens to economic cartels. Here it is best to cite a long passage that epitomizes Horvat's highly controversial position:

> The central category of a political system is authority, just as that of an economic system is property. *Under socialism both must be socialized* [emphasis added]. We can define political authority . . . as free and equal access to any position of political power. That, of course [!] implies the elimination of political parties.

Why so?

> Since they provide obvious advantages to political leaders, parties are not likely to disappear of their own accord. Hence, *they must be forbidden* [emphasis added]. In other words, not the expropriation of private property but the *expropriation of political authority is the necessary and sufficient condition for socialism* [emphasis in original].

What should replace the prohibited parties? Listen:

> The elimination of political parties does not imply the elimination of politics, just as the eradication of cartels does not kill the economy but renders the market more efficient. All that need be done is to forbid donations and the selection of candidates by party bosses. In other words, the party machinery and its political monopoly must be destroyed. The disappearance of political parties will not leave a political vacuum. On the contrary, it will make possible intensive political participation. . . . One, two, or

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several parties will be replaced by a multiplicity of political associations.*

III

Ever since Friedrich Engels in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* dismissed Robert Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier as utopians on the ground that they could criticize capitalism but not sketch a plausible route from it to the society of their dreams, utopian has been a term of invective among Marxists in good standing. Their "scientific socialism" relies upon notions of historical materialism and surplus value.

With the greatest respect for Horvat's achievement in this treatise, I can only conclude that he is closer to the utopians than to the scientific socialists. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, utopian is defined as "possessing or regarded as having impossibly or extravagantly ideal conditions in respect of politics, customs, social organization, etc." Even more nasty is one of the *OED*'s alternatives, "Involving, based or founded on, imaginary or chimerical perfection." Let me collect, in concluding this series of ruminations on themes dear to socialists, the reason why I am constrained to register my critical judgment.

Begin with the Yugoslav experiment with self-management and the generation needed to elevate worker class consciousness postulated by Horvat. Even should that desirable event occur, Horvat envisions a bewildering variety of coordinating, directing, and adjudicating mechanisms that appear highly likely to reinvigorate Horvat's excoriated bureaucracy. As example, his chart of federal institutions lists six types of linkage—market, administration, economic policy, information and consultation, negotiation and arbitration, and some 30 separate administrative bodies. At the state level, there is similar proliferation. If these planning and supervisory devices are essential to socialism in a small country, hope is dim for genuine decentralization and vigorous self-management in large and complex polities such as the United States and the Soviet Union.

Similar caveats apply to Horvat's political remedies. A critic might plausibly argue, for example, that the United States already approaches Horvat's aspirations for the dissolution of political parties. Our model is increasingly entrepreneurial. A drug-store magnate ambitious to govern a large state need not be deterred by the opposition of his party leaders if he is prepared to advertise himself on television and radio. Of course, and here the analogy to Horvat falters, access to the media is a direct function of money. The Senate is as much a millionaire's club as it was in Thomas Nast's day. Still, poorer men or women on occasion collect the needed funds to project their name and image to the electorate from friends, fellow unionists, and, less attractively, from interested corporations.

It is moreover unclear just who is to prohibit political parties and how consistent such a prohibition is with Horvat's usually civil libertarian posture. If, further, associations substitute for parties, how real will be the differences in operation and the exercise of power? In the best of imaginable societies, human groups are likely to entrench themselves and erect barriers to participation in the privileges their situation of power affords them.

I reiterate the precariousness of the foundation upon which Horvat erects his hopes for the evolution of capitalist and etatist nations in the direction of the highest of human needs—self-actualization. If retrogression in the gratification of lower needs occurs, progress toward higher ones may be indefinitely postponed. A certain irony attends Horvat's prospectus for a better world. In the end, it requires not the old Marxist standby of capitalist breakdown, but capitalist success. In the context of material prosperity the well-nourished and protected inhabitants of consumerland will come to resent with rising passion their passive status as consumers and their powerlessness in offices and factories. Rather little in the last decade

* A word of caution is here advisable. There are limits to what a Yugoslav can write in a society that for all its experiments in self-management is still substantially authoritarian. Parties do not operate in Horvat's country but it is difficult to see how any democratic community, self-managed or otherwise, can resolve unavoidable group, regional, and interest conflicts except through the mechanism of party mediation.

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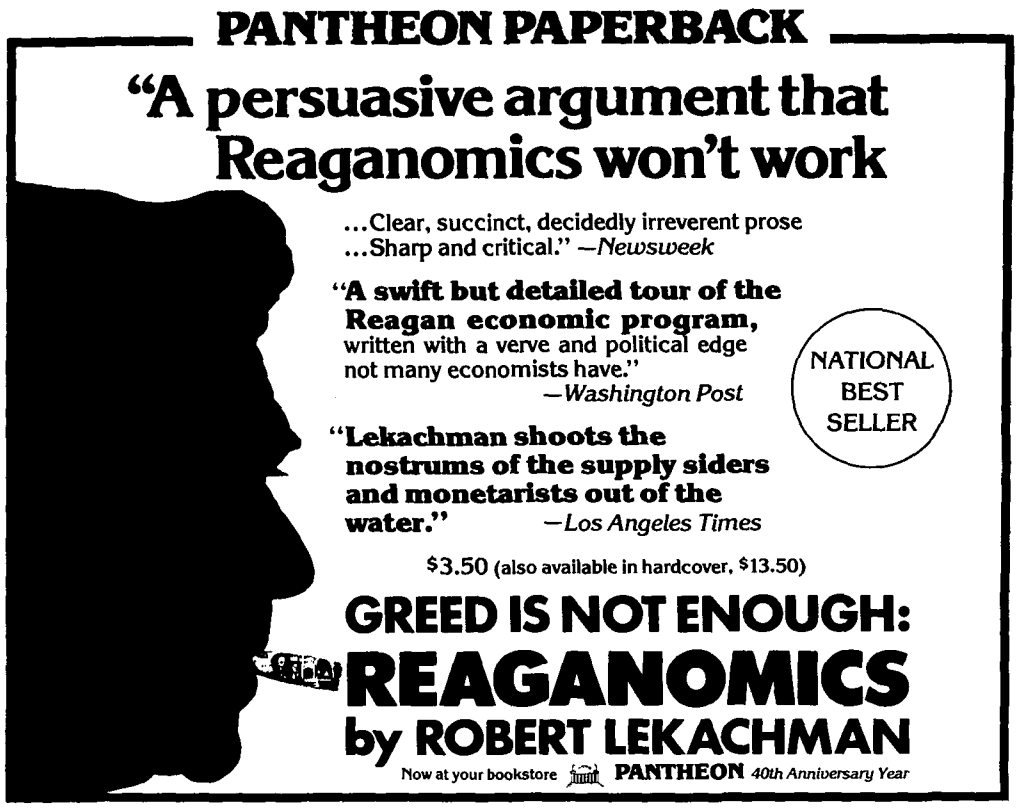
and a half conforms to Horvat's vision of the capitalist future.

As for etatist polities, economic malfunctioning and agricultural failure seem, in the Soviet Union at least, only to have tightened party control of culture, politics, and economic activity. Although Horvat takes pains to disclaim belief in historical inevitability, he is far more cheerful about the prospects of progress in his preferred direction than much of the evidence he himself presents appears to this saddened socialist to support.

Few analysts of contemporary capitalism and socialism match Horvat's command of diverse materials and his analytical sophistication. It is a great pity that this, the crowning achievement of a creative scholar, does not propel one to confidence in the realization of its civilized aspirations.

These are not happy times for partisans both of socialism and of democracy. My own mood —color it indigo—no doubt has influenced the tone of this piece. It is, nevertheless, worthwhile to recall less discouraging phenomena. Mitterrand is bravely conducting a French experiment that combines devolution of central authority, enhanced latitude for trade unions, and substantial redistribution of income and wealth. As the left rallies in this country within the context of continued economic deterioration, our ideas will stand a better chance of influencing progressive Democrats and their allies within the trade union movement. It is an American tendency, to which I have probably fallen victim, to extrapolate unwisely from immediate circumstances. Reagan too will pass and the next swing of the political pendulum will probably be in the direction of the left. Despair is an excuse for inaction. We should not, accordingly, yield ourselves to it. □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Diana Pinto

Mitterrand Confronts the Intellectuals

Paris

The French left came to power with roses in the Pantheon, Beethoven in the streets, a president-writer, and a minister of culture who directed plays rather than bureaucracies: a far cry from Giscard under whose reign culture was little more than the "proper," somewhat fossilized accoutrement of the social life of an *enarque* (graduate of l'Ecole nationale d'administration). For the Socialists, culture is life itself and humanism must replace technocracy's hold over *la douce France.* Economics may suffer, but ideas should prosper under such a government. Or so it would seem.

Is there a major entente between politics, intellectuals, and culture in Mitterrand's France? Has the Left Bank crossed the Seine? In reality, there has never been a greater potential for conflict between French intellectuals and politics than now with the Socialists in power. The cultural tensions that France will experience in the coming years have little to do with confrontations between left and right. At stake is a much more fundamental definition of France—the country's past and future, its international reference points and role.

France is at a crossroad between two alternative cultures. The first gives priority to keeping the country abreast of the more advanced industrial nations, at the cost of accepting that France is only one country among others. The second cultivates instead an image of France as a nation endowed with a special mission, as a cultural and political beacon for a world seeking values beyond economic growth.

The debate over a closed, "hexagonal" (France's shape) vs. an "open" France is not new. It raged in the postwar period, particularly in the economic realm. It was more or less buried by de Gaulle, who managed to bridge the alternatives by pushing the country toward modernization while also pursuing the theme of *grandeur.* But then, under Pompidou, and especially under Giscard, the references to France's mission dwindled, and the country went about the serious task of competing in an increasingly complex international setting, with only the most advanced economic peers (the U.S.A., Germany, and Japan) as models. Perrier, "Le Car," and Boursin replaced Sartre as the symbols of France. Dynamism now was a Protestant work ethic and no longer a form of political virtue.

The Socialist victory has reopened the debate by resurrecting a vision of a France whose strength emanates from its historic and cultural specificity. As heirs of the French Revolution, the Socialists not only wish to establish social justice and economic well-being at home. They also want to show the world that there is a "Latin" alternative to "flabby" Northern social democracy, American economic imperialism, and Soviet totalitarianism. Under Mitterrand, Marianne is alive and well. Clad in socialist pink, she once more leads her troops into battle. This time, however, the *état-major* of her intellectuals may not follow.

The heirs of Hugo, Zola, Malraux, and Sartre have lost faith in the universal implications of French culture, in the role of the intellectual as sacred harbinger of truth, and, most important, in the mystical value of the left—the three essential credos of intellectual life in France since at least the Dreyfus Affair. They have broken the cultural synthesis that made Sartre and de Gaulle effectively two sides of the same coin of national prestige, and acknowledged that France's universal *civilisation* has now turned into little more than threadbare insularity.

Leading philosophers, historians, social scientists, and cultural activists who have come under the spell of an "open" and relativized France—such as Michel Foucault, Claude Lefort, Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie, François Furet, and Cornelius Castoriadis—now dominate the intellectual scene. They are a far more homogeneous group than their

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Anglo-Saxon peers because they share a mission (beyond the Platonic search for truth): the dismantling of France's political, historical, and cultural orthodoxies.

French intellectual life now is defined less by a series of academic disciplines than by a set of key cultural loci where historians, philosophers, and social scientists alike express their ideas. Among them are cultural reviews such as *Le Dêbat*, which aims to critically reassess French culture and society, and *Esprit*, which has put aside its post-1968 preoccupations with *autogestion* to pursue the implications of Soviet totalitarianism for the West; dailies such as *Le Matin* and *Libération*, which publish editorials and articles by intellectuals commenting on the counterculture, Soviet expansionism, French republican traditions; weeklies such as *Le Nouvel Observateur*, whose cultural essays and reviews convey the ideas of the Parisian intellectual elite to its provincial epigones. Nor can one forget the role of television, where intellectuals appear frequently on such shows as *Apostrophes* to comment on their books. The voice of the intellectual/social scientist has never been stronger in France. Ideological argument has given way to an open, nonacademic, antitotalitarian cultural milieu where the principal vocation is to demystify.

Culturally detached analyses of a relativized France became fashionable in the 1970s, precisely at the time when French Socialists, led by Mitterrand, were rebuilding their party by stressing the popular roots and glorious tradition of the French left. The intellectual and Socialist *aggiornamenti* therefore took place at very different levels, reflecting what were ultimately the two incompatible "siblings" of 1968: the libertarian and antiauthoritarian vocation of intellectuals close to civil society, and the political mass mobilization of Socialists bent on controlling the state. These two "siblings" coexisted peacefully in the 1970s, because the right was in power and there were numerous contacts between them. The Socialist party (PSU—Parti Sociale Unifié) first, later its Rocardian wing and the CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique des Travailleurs) of Edmond Maire, and also the cluster of intellectuals around the reviews *Esprit* and *Faire*—all acted as go-betweens, fostering a new disposition toward social innovation and foreign examples. With the impulse of such "new left" initiatives, and given the intellectual shifts inside the Communist camp—with the defenestration of the proletariat at the 22nd Congress of the French CP and the lyrical pluralism of the 40th Congress of the CGT (the Communist-led Confédération Générale des Travailleurs)—it seemed for a while that the spirit of 1968 in its cultural guise had entered the political sanctum.

But Mitterrand's total victory, the marginalization of the Rocardian wing inside the Socialist party and in the government, and the hardening position of the French CP and CGT along old orthodox lines have dispelled the hope of a significant bridge between politics and culture. The two worlds of 1968 are steadily drifting apart.

A new version of the quarrel between the "Ancients" and the "Moderns" is in the making. Sociologically the "Ancients" are represented by those left-wing teachers, *instituteurs*, provincial intellectual notables, and academic trade unionists who have formed the backbone of the Socialist party and who, now newly elected to the National Assembly, have recreated the *république des professeurs*, complete with beards and militant lay historical references. The "Moderns" are supported by a constituency that goes well beyond the Left Bank—including journalists, social activists, media persons, liberal professionals, students, and "plain people," many of them living in the provinces, who have come to appreciate a culture open to an international frame.

The showdown is taking place around three tendencies that reshaped French intellectual life in the 1970s: the opening to the West and a growing interest in American society and culture; the closing to the East and the growing recognition of the nature of the Soviet regime and the Gulag; and the questioning of France's cultural centrality, expressed in the deliberate demystification of the national past.

These tendencies have by no means triumphed within the Socialist world whose character crystallized in 1971 at the Congrès d'Epinay, at a time when the context of French intellectual debates had not yet changed. In 1971 America meant Vietnam, Kent State, racial violence, and a pervasive imperialism. The internal regime of the Soviet Union and the Gulag were still largely passed over in silence by a political left entranced by Bolshevik revolutionary postures and bent on consolidating an alliance with the French Communist party. As for the reconsideration of the French past, one can only say that political movements are seldom built on a critical analysis of their own history. The French Socialist party, rebuilt on the 100th anniversary of the Paris Commune, willfully attached itself to all the myths of France's left-wing national tradition, to prove that it was clearly *à gauche*, and not adrift in the murky waters of social democracy.

Despite their evolution toward a hard-line approach to the Soviet Union, their condemnation of

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the Gulag and their friendly feelings toward the U.S.A., the Socialists of 1982 have remained faithful to their political and cultural ideas of 1971. Their rhetoric is deeply alienating to intellectuals and opinion leaders who look askance at Socialist cultural jingoism. Consider now the three key issues of America, the Soviet Union, and France itself.

America

FRANCE'S INTELLECTUAL OPENING-UP toward America has been less to a country than to a frame of mind that emphasizes individualism, freedom, personal risk, and dynamic tension, in contrast to that of the French left, which has always sought to control, unify, organize, protect, and to legislate.

In the late 1960s French intellectuals were mostly interested in American radicalism, whose protest against the Vietnam war and racism confirmed French left-wing prejudices against the U.S. In the early 1970s, the French radical left became interested in California countercultures and in the variety of liberation movements that America has produced. Gradually, however, French intellectual "Moderns" began to appreciate the very mechanisms of American society: its pluralism, its competitive mentality, its pragmatism, even when they were manifest in such nonradical "mainstream" activities as government, business, scholarship, and journalism. Watergate proved to be a crucial turning point in this context, for it was the established nonradical American press that undid a president—thanks to its total political independence. The *Washington Post's* example of investigative reporting conditioned an entire post-1968 generation of French journalists—just as greater exposure to American universities would breed among French philosophers and historians a healthy appreciation for empirical approaches, for logical positivism, and especially for the model of the intellectual as modest purveyor of knowledge, in an anti-Sartrian stance.[1] America rapidly became synonymous with the realm of the possible; American images and clothing, as well as language, became a shorthand way of declaring personal responsibility and creativity.

French Socialists have not understood the intellectual bases of America's influence upon French society. They have stressed the weight of American cultural imperialism, all the more odious because it is based on materialism, which is the bane of a left with deeply ingrained Catholic roots. They did not realize that, for most of the French, American culture (especially films) crossed borders not because of its economic clout but because of its quality.

It is no accident that the first major clash between the "Ancients" and the "Moderns" should have taken place in the audiovisual realm, the one most influenced by acute "Americanitis." All those who under Giscard had urged for mass media free from political pressures and the creation of independent TV and radio stations now were defeated. The Socialists have refused to admit private interests and have merely licensed local radio within the state monopoly, without advertising—and local voices are still regulated from above. The Left's *étatisme* has predominated over a culturally dynamic civil society. It is not 1968 that has taken over the waves but a Socialist 1958 and tempered by a very "Latin" accommodation to power. The newly created Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, modeled after the august Cour Constitutionelle, will oversee an audiovisual sector that is more than ever in the grips of the state. One should not underestimate the subterranean implications of such a cultural defeat for a generation that is tired of being treated as a "minor" by the sacrosanct state.

But if America formed the backdrop for France's cultural opening-up, it is the Gulag that has given rise to the major tensions between French Socialists and intellectuals.

The Gulag

FRENCH SOCIALISTS now vigorously condemn the Gulag, after having stressed for many years the special circumstances (underdevelopment, encirclement) that could explain yet not justify it. But now they condemn the Gulag as a Soviet crime against human rights, much as they condemn repression in Latin America, South African apartheid, or the sexual mutilations of women in Africa. They resent the intrusion of the Gulag in French affairs—for two key reasons. The first reason is historical: they feel that the Gulag has no roots in France, where the left from the beginning was steeped in the values of democracy. Armed with Jaurès, Guesde, and Blum, French Socialists consider themselves above all suspicion of totalitarianism and their past uncontaminated by Soviet deviations or, for that matter, by German Marxism. The second reason is political: French Socialists have built their party strategy around a political alliance with the French Communists, whom they have always considered integral members of the body politic, and as a true expression of the French people. Throwing the Gulag into French internal

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politics could only provoke a rift in the name of an anticommunism based on "external," Soviet conditions that are not relevant to the French left. Deep inside, French Socialists have felt that the use of the Gulag could only be a rightist ploy.

French philosophers, historians, and social scientists, on the other hand, place the Gulag at the very center of their debates, for they believe that its implications are directly relevant to an understanding of France's historical past and political present. With their conviction that the roots of the Gulag are not to be found in Russian backwardness but in Western totalitarian ideas and revolutionary practice, French intellectuals in effect have brought the Gulag home. The result has been a major intellectual rereading of the "silences" of the French left, a negative reevaluation of the Communist party, a reconsideration of liberal democracy and formal liberties and, most of all, a direct confrontation with the holiest of historical topics—the French Revolution.

France's much publicized *nouveaux philosophes*—who, in 1977, turned Solzhenitsyn into summer reading and whom the left viewed as intellectual bridgeheads to Giscardian France—were really a manifestation of a far stronger and more original intellectual current. Claude Lefort and François Furet are among their best known representatives. Under their analytical scalpels, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic period, and above all the Restoration have been dissected to reveal the ultimately nonpluralist, antilibertarian, and totalitarian nature of the very concept of "revolution."[2] The ultimate implications of all this research and thought are radically incompatible with the basic, historical *Weltanschauung* of the Socialists in power for whom the French Revolution is the prime mover of all their political action. Mitterrand has already appointed a popular historian, Claude Manceron, to prepare the bicentennial of the French Revolution, which will begin in 1984. While the Socialists celebrate, some intellectuals are coming to the conclusion that, if France is the libertarian pluralist democracy Mitterrand praises, it is not thanks to the French Revolution but to the Restoration, which established the principles of formal liberties and pluralism—the only concrete guarantors against totalitarianism.[3]

The implications of the Gulag also divide Socialists and intellectuals on another front—that of viewing oppressive regimes around the world. Both, of course, condemn all infractions against human rights, wherever they occur. The Socialists, seeking to create an international fraternity based on *latinité*, stress the plight of Latin Americans at the mercy of national fascisms and American economic imperialism. French intellectuals, however, have their eyes riveted on the East European countries' victims of the Soviet regime, because they view the struggles that have taken place there, especially in Poland, as crucially important to the search for possible alternatives to state dictatorships in a Marxist context. The Soviet menace, in the view of French intellectuals, is infinitely greater than the "open" misdeeds of the U.S., because it has thrived, they argue, on a series of instances of silence and self-censorship on the part of the West vis-à-vis the entire revolutionary mystique. Hence French intellectuals were shocked when a Socialist France signed the gas-pipeline deal with the Soviet Union shortly after the military state of siege began in Poland—and they do have a strong suspicion that socialism in France cannot be understood in terms that are totally divorced from its foreign (failed) incarnations.

France

FRENCH SOCIALISTS have a very nationalistic, literary, and quasimystical vision of France that stands in marked contrast to the cosmopolitanism of France's modern intellectuals. There is a fusion of Barrès and Malraux in Mitterrand's analysis of France, which he shares most deeply with de Gaulle, and it is de Gaulle whom he imitates not only culturally but also politically in his Socialist version of French *grandeur*.

For Mitterrand, France is the sum of its long-hallowed past in which kings mingle with revolutionaries and *le peuple* to form a unique blend of national glory whose last chapter, the *résistance*, takes on echoes of Valmy in the Socialist memory. The past is a vast reservoir for political and cultural inspiration, a national myth to be celebrated—as in Mitterrand's Pantheon procession past the key symbols of the French left. This stance could not be further removed from the concerns of France's intellectuals, who have turned to the past with the deliberate intent of breaking away from its myths and its old battles.

France's contemporary historians prefer the role of anthropologists delving into their own culture to that of high priests exorcising or celebrating it.[4] Their historical work is not hostile to the political left, but it is the product of a completely different mental set, which refuses to link present-day politics to the past as history. The Socialists have idealized *le peuple*, turning it once again into a major collective actor, while French historians are more interested in its sociological diversity. The

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conflict is essentially between those who study the symbolism of revolutionary statues and those who lay flowers at their feet.

Not only are historians looking at the past in a new nonmythical light; they are also deliberately probing into the "underside" of French history, its silences and skeletons. Vichy France is a case in point. Socialists wish to stress the heroic and generous role of the *résistants* and their popular roots and have once more made May 8, the anniversary of the end of World War II and of Joan of Arc also, a national holiday (after Giscard had dropped it). French historians and intellectuals, however, emphasize instead just how deep collaboration ran and to what a degree anti-Semitism was a constant in French life.[5]

Socialists see the past as a vast struggle between good and evil. For the intellectuals, however, the past has become a domain for the hunting-down of taboos. It is in such a spirit that *Libération* was able to compare Prime Minister Mauroy's war on unemployment to Pétain's social policies, in what amounted to political blasphemy for the Socialists but was perfectly admissible for the intellectuals as anthropologists.[6]

Old taboos are all the more easily challenged because intellectuals have lifted the veil under which they had previously shrouded their "noble" work. France's intellectual, like the rest of society, has "modernized" and professionalized himself, and "disenchanted" his vocation. Le *génie créateur* has given way to the *intellocrate*.[7] It is unlikely that those who have really relativized their status once again will be willing to espouse the role of the engaged militant à la Sartre, a role that the Socialists continue to revere from afar.

Ultimately America, the Gulag, and France's past are only symbols of a far wider clash of *mentalité* between French Socialists and French intellectuals—two worlds that are steadily growing farther apart, making the Socialist cultural wager as difficult to implement as their economic program.

Images do not lie. The small village with a church steeple, which radiated *la force tranquille* behind Mitterrand in his presidential campaign poster, spoke well of the Socialist sensitivity to a France *à l'heure de son clocher*, a France whose country roots are traditional and calm and that is, above all, uninterested in the dynamic notion of constant change. But does this tranquil France exist, after 20 years of major structural economic and social changes have led Paris and the provinces down the uncertain road of modernity, with all its irreverence and international comparisons? Socialist references to the glory of French culture, to France's mission and time-steeped values, will not go over well with generations that have replaced the pink and green of France and Germany in Mitterrand's schoolboy maps with the metallic reflections of intergalactic star wars.

France's traditional geography is now pitted against the new geography of the mind in a major cultural struggle.

Notes

[1] Olivier Todd, *Un fils rebelle*(Paris, 1981). Todd's book is the first to come to grips "negatively" and intimately with Sartre.

[2] Claude Lefort, *Un homme en trop: réflexion sur l'Archipel du Goulag* (Paris, 1976); *Les Formes de l'histoire: essai d'anthropologie politique* (Paris, 1978); *L'Invention démocratique*, (Paris, 1981).

François Furet, *Penser la révolution française* (Paris 1978); English translation, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press/Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981).

[3] Marcel Gauchet and Gladys Swain, *La Pratique de l'Esprit Humain: l'institution asiliaire et la révolution démocratique* (Paris, 1980).

B. de Constant, *De la Liberté chez les modernes*, M. Gauchet, ed. (Paris, 1980).

[4] M. Aguhlon, *La République au village* (Paris, 1979); *Marianne au combat: l'imagerie et la symbolique républicaine* (Paris, 1979); English translation, *Marianne into Battle* (Cambridge University Press/Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981).

Mona Ozouf, *La Fête révolutionnaire 1789–1799* (Paris, 1976); *La Classe ininterrompue: cahiers de la famille Sandre enseignants 1780–1960* (Paris, 1979).

J. Ozouf 2nd F. Furet, *Lire et écrire: l'alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry* (Paris, 1977).

[5] This dark, negative current has been tremendously popular in the past decade whether through such films as *The Sorrow and the Pity, Lacombe Lucien, Un sac de billes,* or through the major impact of Robert Paxton's work. But there are limits to French "culpabilization." When B.H. Lévy tried to show in his latest tract, *L'Idéologie Française*, that anti-Semitism was the very core of French ideology since the Enlightenment, French intellectuals rose up en masse against him to qualify and ultimately disprove his thesis.

[6] *Libération*, September 16, 1981.

[7] *Les Intellocrates* is the title of a new book by Hamon and Rotman, which takes the reader backstage to the intrigues, deals, favors, and hidden rules of the game of the Parisian publishing world. On this topic, see also Régis Debray, *Le Pouvoir intellectuel en France* (Paris, 1979). □

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Mark Greenberg

A Breakdown of Consensus

Mounting Problems in the Welfare State

With "A Breakdown of Consensus: Mounting Problems in the Welfare State," Mark Greenberg has won the First Essay Contest for Young Writers sponsored by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas.

Traditionally, it has been the role of the left to question whether an adequate welfare program could ever be developed and maintained within the American economic system. Now, suddenly, we find politicians in both parties arguing that the development of such a program is impossible (or unnecessary). This emerging consensus creates a short-term problem and suggests a long-term one. The short-term problem concerns the question of how one defends admittedly defective programs, with full knowledge of their defects, when the only alternative is to allow them to collapse. The long-term problem concerns the question of how to advocate necessary structural changes, when the transitional programs are, perhaps necessarily, so unsatisfactory that they dissolve the consensus by which they are achieved.

Public reactions to the first round of Reagan budget cuts need to be recognized and analyzed as more than mere deference to a new president elected with "a mandate." As the public attitudes toward the budget cuts crystallized, one aspect stood out. Although, unquestionably, the cuts would affect the federal poverty programs substantially and severely, the public seemed to respond with acquiescence. Opponents of the cuts documented, in meticulous detail, the impact the various individual and cumulative cuts would have on the living standards of the poorest sectors of the population; yet this documentation carried remarkably little weight. Indeed, significant numbers of Americans and among them many liberals responded, with little more than a mixture of regret and fatalism, that, while unfortunate, these cutbacks in social welfare spending were a necessary part of a "plan" to revitalize the economy. One explanation for this response is that the notion had taken hold, by the time Reagan took office, that the federal budget was inflation's primary cause—and its social welfare portion the real culprit. Even many who said they truly regretted the welfare cuts asserted that there was "no choice," if we wished to control inflation.

The public's notion of a welfare-inflation link is hardly well-grounded. As members of the Reagan administration now eagerly acknowledge, there never was a clear link between the size of the federal deficit and the rate of inflation—and so the welfare structure surely was not the key factor. The costs for many of its programs that were to be slashed had been minimal in terms of the total budget. Even if the Administration was totally committed to a balanced budget, there was a multitude of alternative reductions, taxation rates and loopholes that might have yielded at least the same results. As the point that the concept of a welfare-inflation linkage is flawed is no secret, it is hard to believe that the public truly accepted that the cuts were unavoidable and that there was "no choice." In order to gain an understanding of how this public acquiescence and the events of the past year came about, it is

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crucial to explore other aspects of the popular reaction.

The welfare structure has many objective functions that were never mandated by the millions of Americans who are not personally involved in its shaping or operation. This distinction between the structure's objective effects and the popular mandate is important: the public never demanded either the program's specific details or the details of its cutbacks. Rather, at certain historic moments, concerned social movements have conveyed a general demand or idea, which then was defined, put into practice, and shaped into a specific structure, without much public scrutiny. As the new structure began to operate and take form, it reshaped the public attitude toward the original idea.

The public, of course, is not a monolith with a single mind but a sum of individuals and interest groups, and any generalization of "public attitudes" must fail to account for those who do not share the majority's view. Nevertheless, our discussion proceeds from the hypothesis that so many attitudes and perceptions about welfare cut across class, race, and regional divisions that it is justified to discuss and evaluate them as a whole.

The Perception/Reality Gap

LET US LOOK, first, at some of the gaps between the welfare structure's actual functions and the public's perceptions of them. Those who had to shape and develop the details of the welfare structure had to consider the provision of benefits in relation to the problems of the secondary labor market. The establishment of socially adequate welfare benefits is commonly considered undesirable, because they supposedly will "destroy work incentives."

There is a vague, general awareness that some people cannot reasonably be expected to work and that, in principle, it should be possible to set their benefits at a level approaching social adequacy. The problem is, however, that there is no sharp division between this category and that of persons who could work under some circumstances. This is partly a methodological problem: it is enormously costly to assemble and evaluate the relevant medical and vocational factors that decide a person's category. But, in greater part, the problem is conceptual: there is a large gray area in which it is impossible to determine a person's category. For the categorization of "unable to work" depends only partially on the person's aptitudes and medical condition—and to a greater extent on the condition of the economy and the provision of supportive social services.

The welfare structure either must find some means of distinguishing between these two categories of people or peg benefits at the lower level of the two. Our existing structure has made a half-hearted attempt to distinguish, and in some measure provide for, the clearest members of the "unable to work" category—and it makes all others rely on low benefits. Yet it is hard to conceive of this choice as mandated by the public. The notion that there really are no fixed categories has never figured in the public debate. Witness the strong impression that the "truly needy" are a definable group.

Because these categories cannot be sharply delineated, it is feared that persons capable of working may be drawing benefits approaching social adequacy. Therefore bureaucratic structures were set up with the purpose of providing low benefits that are combined with a set of disincentives—so that the receipt of benefits will never be an attractive alternative to work. Let us call these disincentives the "welfare recipient experience." Despite the gradual development of limited legal protection and some notable advances made by welfare rights groups, the experience of being a welfare recipient continues to be characterized by an unlearnable maze of rules and regulations pervading daily existence; by a general waiver of the right to privacy; by a constant fear that assistance may be terminated because of a case worker's whim; and by the constant anxiety that, at any point, one may be charged with welfare fraud.

Again, one cannot say that this structure flows from a popular mandate. The gap between the general public impression of the easy life of the welfare recipient and the recipient's actual experience has always been and continues to be enormous. The most common reaction of the first-time recipient is that the treatment he is receiving is a mistake or caused by a

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misunderstanding. Only the continuous experience demonstrates its systemic nature. Yet, objectively, the existing structure has been highly functional. The benefit levels insure that whenever a minimum-wage job is available as an alternative or supplement, the recipient will opt for it. A subsistence level of benefits insures that those who cannot find employment are able to avoid a highly visible desperation that would embarrass the society. The dehumanizing bureaucratic structure serves as a constant warning to any person that welfare is no alternative to working. It is hard to claim that the public has willed the structure to exist in this form or to operate as it does, but its functionality is apparent.

Why then has the Reagan administration attacked the welfare system, and why has the public responded without demur? The answer from the standpoint of the national leadership would be very different than that of the public. For the Reagan administration, the major goal for supporting a welfare structure is the prevention of social disorder, and the Administration is seeking to attain that goal at the least possible cost. So far, the process of determining the lowest subsistence level that can prevent disorder is not a science but guesswork. Therefore, some in the Reagan camp would argue, in times when the threat of unrest and disorder loomed large, the government may have erred and provided "excessive" benefits. Now that the threat seems minimal, the government takes another look, finds benefits higher than they need be, and the tinkering begins. In this framework, some of the preliminary cuts of the Carter years can be viewed as a "testing of the water"—so now the Reagan administration can be bolder.

Further, to the extent that this Administration is responsive to small-business interests, which require a compliant minimum-wage labor force, the welfare cuts are a means of reducing the need for taxation while providing targeted assistance. Just as accelerated depreciation reduces the cost of capital, welfare cuts reduce the cost of labor. Because the current "social disorder quotient" seems low, this can be done, the Reagan people believe, without the risks it might earlier have entailed.

Most Americans, however, do not normally talk of welfare as a means of curbing disorder, nor have they a clear sense of the structure and needs of the secondary labor market. Their attitudes were best captured and played upon in Reagan's addresses to the nation: benefits to "the truly needy" should be maintained—but the existing system "has gone much further," and could and should be cut back.

How did this perception come about? The following pages will suggest that the development of the public perception was, to a great extent, predictable. The programs now under attack were constructed in a manner that virtually assured their loss of support in a no-growth economy. Their construction generated limited constituencies, high visibility, and a deceptive multiplicity of programs in which the relationship between poverty and the economy was carefully ignored. Each of these aspects of the welfare structure tended to produce a set of attitudes that now have resulted in the public renunciation of income supports.

The Threat of Poverty—Credible for Whom?

PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS of how the nation should deal with poverty depend to some extent on whether they think it likely that they themselves may some day be poor. In the context of an increasingly rigidified class structure, the likelihood that an individual who was not born in poverty will become truly poor has diminished. As a result, the poor among us have become more distinctive, and poverty tends to be seen as a problem limited to those persons who now are poor. Hence public commitment to programs designed only for the poor thins out. In hard times, charity is often viewed as the first "unnecessary expenditure" to be dispensed with.

The shift in public response to these problems since the 1930s can best be illustrated by contrasting the manner in which the Social Security Act emerged with the emergence and design of the postwar income-support systems. The Social Security Act was the first federal effort at income support. Prior to the Depression, the limited programs that existed functioned on state and local levels, with minimal funding and coverage. The long absence of

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federal income supports can in part be explained by the fact that until the Great Depression it was possible for most Americans to believe in the Invisible Hand theory, wherein work, merit, and reward are highly correlated. So long as Americans trusted in the Invisible Hand, it seemed natural and appropriate that welfare efforts should be localized, addressing the specific failures of specific individuals.

The economy's collapse made these beliefs untenable; for the notion that employment and income derived solely from talent and a willingness to work was then put under enormous stress. The belief that the numbers of those seeking assistance consisted of a few unfortunates and an undetermined number of shiftless persons was rebutted by daily experience. The sudden expansion of the unemployment rate to a level in excess of 20 percent demonstrated that broad economic forces were determining destinies. As unemployment and severe underemployment hit more and more of the traditional middle class, the Invisible Hand rationale and the tenet that systematic federal income support was improper could no longer be maintained.

In response to increasingly wide and radical demands for an income-support structure, the federal government provided the Social Security Act of 1935. The Social Security Act established the basic structure out of which all other and later programs have evolved. At that moment, the essential base of Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, Aid to Dependent Children, and federal assistance to the blind and to the elderly all at once came into existence. In retrospect, the most striking features of the structure were its simultaneous concession of the economy's inability to generate incomes, and its patently limited response. Rather than acknowledge that economic crises create poverty, the structure laid down that there were distinct categories of persons who needed assistance. In light of the presumption that the middle class's submersion in unemployment and economic disaster was a temporary phenomenon, the programmatic response was to establish one program—Unemployment Compensation—for the frictionally unemployed, and otherwise to focus relief programs on categories with no likely relation to the labor force. At that time each of the categories defined—the elderly, the blind, mothers (presumably widows) with young children—were categories one could acknowledge as incapable of self-support. Thus, still, the carving-out of these appropriate categories contained an implicit ratification of the Invisible Hand theory; by programmatically asserting that there were exceptions, the structure reaffirmed the old rule.

The programs that emerged in response to the Depression reflected both the recognition that it was possible to lose one's job and be unemployed for some time through no fault of one's own, and also that there were categories of people in our society that could not be expected to be part of the work force. The Social Security programs demonstrate the manner in which the political structure could acknowledge the economy's inability to generate employment while simultaneously denying the full implications of the insight.

From the perspective of a submerged middle class, the Social Security programs responded to an existing credible threat. From the standpoint of the economy, the programs represented a necessary measure, no more. We shall find a similarly limited response, but in a dramatically different context, as we consider the Great Society and post-Great Society income/in-kind programs. These also did not derive from a mass perception that many Americans, at one time or another, might have to face the threat of poverty. These programs, rather, were initiated in response to the demands and moral suasion of the civil rights movement and to the threats of unrest and disorder in the nation's cities. They responded to the national attention that was then focused on the fact that the poor were hungry, without medical care, and ill-housed.

The architects of the Great Society programs were faced with the dilemma that the Social Security Act had probably gone as far as the government could go in laying down unobjectionable categories of poor persons—and yet some further response was demanded. Having exhausted the obvious categories of poor persons and nevertheless finding poverty pervasive, how could the welfare system be expanded without risking additional subversion

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of work norms? The answer was to shift from categories of persons to categories of needs.

Were the poor hungry? Give them Food Stamps. Were they unable to afford medical care? Give them Medicaid. Were they unable to afford decent housing? Expand public housing dramatically, and establish a range of rent-subsidy programs. In each case, rather than confront the significance of the presence of millions of poor persons who did not fit into the categories designated by the earlier programs, the response was to provide categories of benefits, labeling the poor person as a Food Stamp recipient, Medicaid recipient, Public Housing recipient. These categorical needs programs were never seen nor sold as programs designed for all citizens. They were clearly structured and recognized as being for "the poor." To a great extent, they were also viewed as programs for black people.

This later set of income-support programs, founded in the days of the Great Society and thereafter—rather than the Social Security complex—have particularly felt the Reagan onslaught. They are not part of the original "safety net" and were never perceived as part of the middle class's protection from credible threats. They were initiated in a growing economy, at a time when moral commitments did not seem to have expensive price tags. When the economy stalled and stopped growing, these programs were a readily identifiable portion of government spending that offered no reasonable prospect of material benefit to the nonpoor.

Just as the Social Security Act had gone no further than necessary in responding to the demands of its time, so too the Great Society and post-Great Society categorical needs programs. The essential difference is that the former established a structure responsive to a broad range of social concerns, and the latter merely "gave things" to the poor. Hence the earlier programs retain support, and the later ones are vulnerable.

An Absence of Commonality

THE ABSENCE of a credible poverty threat for much of the society made it simpler to structure the Great Society and post-Great Society programs in a manner that limited their availability to a distinctly targeted sector of the population rather than to the society as a whole. This was by no means inevitable but done by choice. The result was a set of programs and program recipients with which nonrecipients did not identify. This absence of commonality has generated a set of attitudes that have undermined program support.

Even after the strategy of responding to needs was established, some broader notion of entitlement might yet have been developed, in which a complex of goods and services could have been seen as the fundamental right of all members of the society. Aspects of this perspective often laced the rhetoric of the time. The more specific strategy, however, was to structure each program on a relatively narrow eligibility/ineligibility basis, justified by considerations of cost rather than need. The result was the provision of goods to the poor that were unavailable to the nearpoor—and most nonrecipients saw no reasonable likelihood that they would ever become recipients of these programs.

It is a basic guideline of American politics that in order to make a program fail, one organizes it upon a narrow eligibility/ineligibility basis. If one wants a program to succeed, one establishes commonality between persons who may be in dramatically different circumstances, and one finds ways to avoid narrow distinctions. The best recent example is the Kemp-Roth "Trojan Horse." As David Stockman belatedly admitted, it was apparent to the Reagan planners that in order to lower tax rates for the wealthy, it was necessary to make it appear that the program was in everybody's interest. Rather than attempt to persuade the nation that the public interest is served by reducing tax rates for high-income individuals, the Kemp-Roth tax bill was structured to obtain approval by claiming to offer benefits to all tax-payers. Because of these claims of commonality, persons in objectively different circumstances perceived common interests.

Social Security is the classic example of a welfare program that was structured to avoid the narrow eligibility/ineligibility distinction and establish commonality among a broad base of Americans. Certainly, it is inefficient to

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provide benefits to millions of persons who do not need them; but this provision has resulted in a large constituency that makes the program virtually invincible. The creation of a broad base also diminished the likelihood that people would think of Social Security as a welfare program, since welfare programs are thought of as, by definition, narrow in base. Significantly, when announcing his attack on other income-support programs, Reagan wisely chose to lead off with the assurance that Social Security would remain unaffected. When, emboldened by initial success, the Administration began to consider modifications of Social Security, the ensuing enormous furor rapidly dissuaded them. Despite the patent irrationalities and inequities of its funding and benefit structure, Social Security's commonality component makes it untouchable.

Social Security can be dramatically contrasted with Food Stamps. This contrast is important because, in many respects, the Food Stamp program has come as close as this country ever has to a guaranteed annual income. Food Stamps is the only federal benefit program available on a continuous basis to poor persons so long as they meet income eligibility guidelines, without the need to fit into other categories. Thus it is important to analyze how and why the program has lost popular support. The Food Stamp program has come to be viewed as the obvious, classic example of liberal government gone haywire. Here as elsewhere, the absence of commonality tends to generate a myth of public generosity, and this has led to a set of perverse effects.

The myth of generosity may be based on little more than people's tendency to feel that "the grass is greener . . . ," that something they can't have must be good—and on a deep-felt American belief that the government is benevolent, sometimes absurdly so. The establishment of a benefits program with a narrow eligibility/ineligibility distinction leads to a persistent public perception that the program is fully adequate for its recipients. In the case of Food Stamps, allotments are actually predicated on a computer-generated diet for a family of nutritionists; benefits have never averaged more than $0.45 per meal; the Department of Agriculture has estimated that only 10 percent of the recipients attain the daily requirements of essential nutrition. Nevertheless, the public is convinced that the program is extravagant.

In a word association game, when one says "Food Stamps," the standard response has become "woman with a full shopping cart buying steak." Indeed, the word "myth" is most applicable here. It no longer matters whether or not that woman exists. The point is that the program began by evoking the picture of a malnourished child, and now conjures up the picture of a person who is doing very well, probably has things you don't have.

THREE INSIDIOUS CONSEQUENCES flow from the myth of generosity.

- First, since program benefits are perceived as more than adequate there is, of course, little support for program expansion, and a general assumption that benefits could well be reduced without causing harm.
- Second, the myth intensifies a process of invidious comparison between recipients and nonrecipients. Most middle-income and surely lower-income Americans are constantly made aware of a range of goods and services they desire but can't afford. And necessarily, for most, there must be a trade-off between food purchases and other expenditures. So, when one is shopping and making hard choices, it is a constant point of irritation that the Food Stamp recipient ahead in the line has free money to spend. This frustration, of course, is felt most intensely by low-income near-eligible persons.
- Third, when the word-association game does not evoke the woman-with-steak picture, it elicits the word "fraud." Again, it no longer matters whether or how much fraud exists, because the myth reflects a deeper social implication. It reflects the notion that you cannot give things away because, if you do, people will take advantage of you. It also reflects the notion that "these people" don't want to work—they just want to live off the government. Thus the feeling of moral superiority is reinforced in the nonrecipient community, and the presumption of the poor's criminality is confirmed.

When a poor person steals bread to feed the

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family, people often feel great sympathy. But if the same person misrepresents eligibility to obtain enough Food Stamps to get bread for the family, that person is subject to criminal prosecution and public vilification. Part of the distinction may stem from the fact that the person who steals bread takes it from the baker or store owner, and the one who steals Food Stamps takes them from us. But the more important part of the distinction is the objectification that flows from the generosity myth: Food Stamps "deal with" hunger; therefore those who claim still to be hungry must be doing something wrong. The person in the store presumes the Food Stamp recipient is doing wrong. The case worker presumes it. And finally the recipient, required to "report all changes in circumstances" within ten days, often without any idea of what changes one is supposed to report, tends to presume it as well. If everyone else in the society believes benefits are adequate, why can't I get by? Again, the point is not whether this response is rational but that it happens, flows from the structure of the program, is a predictable result of that structure.

Making Beneficiaries Visible

THE FACT that these support programs were structured without an attempt to engage the citizenry's sense of commonality did not necessarily have to lead to their recipients' high visibility. This was a further choice made by those who developed the details of the programs—a choice the public is usually unaware of and on which it is unlikely to have a strong opinion.

Again, there is the contrast with Social Security. Its recipients receive a check every month, cash and deposit it, and are indistinguishable from the rest of the population. Their self-image is that of citizen rather than Social Security recipient. In contrast, Food Stamp recipients must carry their stamps to the market every time they need food. Medicaid recipients must carry their card. Public housing recipients live in massive and clearly labeled structures. They all are set apart from those who don't receive these benefits. This high visibility reinforces the myth of public generosity, and generates an image of the recipients' uniqueness. And so it is hardly surprising that the low-income, ineligible person, who is constantly confronted with the presence of the lowest-income, eligible beneficiary, will make invidious comparisons.

At the same time, out of the whole range of goods, services, and subsidies provided by the government, the only ones handed out so visibly are those received by the poor. Hence it is natural for people to draw the conclusion that the poor are uniquely provided for. That picture, however, will change as soon as we make even the most casual survey of support programs for the nonpoor. We soon shall find such benefits as price supports, acreage allotments, low-interest loans, tax breaks and loopholes, and government purchases—all subsidizing the incomes of a wide range of economic actors, including large corporations and some of the truly wealthy. Yet all these programs are virtually invisible to the general public, and none operate in a manner that will remind people every time they go to the store, restaurant, or bank that we are giving things away to these recipients. And surely, even the tax loss that follows just one deductible business lunch will often amount to more than the entire monthly Food Stamp allotment for many a household. Yet, other than instituting welfare badges, it would be hard to come up with a labeling device that could more clearly set recipients apart and would make them more visible than the Food Stamp program.

Because the benefits of the poor are seen as unique, they are also uniquely vulnerable. Approximately 70 percent of the first-year Reagan cuts were directed at programs providing benefits to the low-income community. Many Americans did not consider this an unreasonable percentage, because they generally assume that the federal government's primary activities are in the areas of defense and the provision of benefits to the poor. Besides, there is that consistent tendency to overestimate the percentage of the federal budget allotted to goods and services for the poor. This partly is a corollary of the myths of public generosity and of the poor's uniqueness. Since these are the programs where one sees government money being spent, the public reaction to the charge

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that the budget cuts were aimed disproportionately at them was that in hard times there is "no choice" but to have such cuts fall upon the poor.

A "Multiple Needs" Program

THE WELFARE ARCHITECTS of the 1960s faced a critical decision once they had concluded that there were no remaining unobjectionable categories of needy persons. They saw their basic choice between an attempt to provide income directly to employable people through government employment—or a design of categories of need, along with a set of punitive sanctions for the employable. They chose the latter route. They decided against significant forays into government employment for two reasons: first, government does not wish to compete with private enterprise; second, government is fearful of a condition of full employment.

In practice, the government's unwillingness to compete with private enterprise has functioned as the greatest restraint in flourishing periods that were close to full employment. In periods of sustained recession, when the connection between the poor and the labor market is most tenuous, the government has been less adverse to provisions of countercyclical employment. But all this is not automatic; even in the present recession, the Reagan administration prefers to test its hypothesis that large reductions in welfare eligibility will make people find jobs. At any rate, federal countercyclical employment has always been so minimal as to have a negligible effect on the labor market. And at no time in America has countercyclical employment been viewed as an entitlement. The New Deal employment programs, for example, all were defined as temporary, without hope of permanency. More recently a great deal of, but unsuccessful, litigation was directed at efforts to draw meaningful entitlements out of the CETA legislation.

But the major problem in creating an entitlement to employment is that it would fundamentally reorient the bargaining position of labor. Entitlement to employment would increase the cost of labor for low-wage employers; it would enhance the unions' capacity to improve working conditions; it would create conditions of labor security that might lead to union demands inconceivable so long as unemployment is a constant specter.

The designers of the Great Society programs rejected the entitlement-to-employment option; instead they chose programs of in-kind benefits—benefits that are not jobs and not money. Because they are not money, they still leave their recipients needing jobs. A needy household provided with a monthly Food Stamps allotment still has no way to pay its rent. Medicaid recipients receiving health care still cannot heat their apartments. These categorized needs programs were able to respond to the demands of the time, could aid in warding off the most egregious social disasters, yet still would maintain fairly strong work incentives.

The decision to develop such programs rather than pursue an employment strategy has had two distinct results: a perception of program multiplicity, and a perception that programs "aren't accomplishing anything." The perception of multiplicity is generated because people have many kinds of needs, and the attempt to respond to them without creating entitlements and without providing adequate benefits for the employable has led to a crazy quilt. Again, the nutrition example is illuminating. Food Stamps are made available to the poor, but benefits are set artificially low to maintain work incentives. Benefits are so low that pregnant women receiving Food Stamps are at risk during pregnancy. Then a WIC (supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children) is established. Benefits are so low that school children suffer in their daily performance; thus a school breakfast program is established. Benefits for the elderly are so low that they are found eating dog and cat food, and programs are established to feed the elderly.

The effect of this multiplicity of programs leads to a perception of a welfare state with cradle-to-grave protection—and with countless programs for the poor. The reality is quite different. But over time the general public impression is fostered that benefits programs pervade the society, and that if people are poor, the reason is quite likely that they choose to be so in order to receive benefits. This perception of a multiplicity of welfare programs also rein-

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forces the myths of public generosity and of the recipients' uniqueness. We seem to be providing an infinite array of programs for the poor, and for some who appear to be doing at least as well as many of us. Is all this assistance really necessary?

The choice to respond to categories of needs rather than formulate an employment strategy also generated the widespread conviction that programs "don't accomplish anything." This is the impression because over time tens of millions of people fit, and many of them continue to fit, official definitions of "the needy."

One fundamental difference between the programs adopted at the time of the Social Security Act and the more recent ones is that the latter have fewer artificial barriers to eligibility. The Social Security trio of Aid to the Blind, Old Age Assistance, and Aid to Dependent Children was established in a manner that allowed states to impose arbitrary conditions—and with the government's full knowledge and expectation that many states would deny eligibility to black people. Until the 1960s, racial discrimination continued to be the rule in provision of welfare benefits in much of the nation. Similarly, participation was limited through state imposition of a range of "moral" requirements.

As social forces broke down the arbitrary barriers, it became possible for all persons to apply for the programs they were eligible for. In some instances, the results were unexpected increases in program participation. Program growth tended to slow during the 1970s, but only where legislation or inflation narrowed eligibility. When the requirement that households pay for Food Stamps was eliminated, the program finally became available to the poorest of the poor, and participation expanded. It is not puzzling that program participation did not decline. A family's need for food, housing, heat, and medical care has little ebb and flow from year to year. Employment may ebb and flow in the secondary labor market, but the nature of that labor market insures that over time a participant's lot does not improve. The provision of food or housing this month plays an important role in the family's subsistence but has little effect on its long-term prospects. Indeed, programs providing categories of need—without any connection to employment—are inherently static. They are holding actions that cannot reduce poverty except in a narrow, definitional sense. Because they cannot lead to improvements—because poverty has never been structurally acknowledged to be more than temporary—the programs are assumed to accomplish nothing. Over time high program participation without "improvement" is taken to prove that the programs must be providing assistance to persons who do not need them. Their reduction seems both possible and sensible, and doing no social harm.

Future Directions

IN ITS REORGANIZATION of the federal poverty budget, the Reagan administration is able to exploit the public attitudes I have described. The specific manner of its reductions and reorganizations appears to be designed to intensify all these attitudes.

So far, the Reagan planners have avoided attacking either the base of Social Security or the related programs—with one exception. The only program under the Social Security Act that has been significantly attacked is Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). This is a special case, as the transformation of AFDC over the past 45 years has resulted in a program that bears little resemblance to its original form, to which the Reagan administration apparently aims to restore the program.

AFDC began as the Aid to Dependent Children portion of the Social Security Act. It was intended as a means of providing federal assistance to states for the funding of mothers' pensions, so that children would not have to be taken away from their mother when a male wage-earner died and left the household without a source of support. As originally structured, AFDC was expected to be small, and to terminate as more and more households were covered by Social Security.

Because the program offered the sole income support for many poor families, it grew instead of withering away. The most dramatic growth occurred in the 1960s, as the combination of civil rights/welfare rights consciousness, urbanization, and the decline of formal racial discrimination made AFDC generally

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available to more households meeting eligibility definitions. AFDC became the basic income support program for households where a parent was missing, incapacitated, or (in some states) unemployed. In 1967, Congress adopted legislation that changed the manner in which income eligibility was determined. The new law made it possible for some households to retain eligibility when members were employed at minimum wage or subminimum wage. As a result, AFDC now served a greater mix of working and nonworking households.

The Reagan revisions of AFDC now make it impossible for many working but poor households to retain eligibility. The specific changes have standardized and reduced existing deductions, and the law now limits the time for which a household can receive the major work-incentive deduction to four months (after which the household cannot receive the deduction again until it has been without benefits for 12 consecutive months). As the changes become implemented, the number of households with an employed member who are able to receive assistance will steadily decline.

The changes in consideration of income from employment are not the only ones in AFDC. Other changes restrict eligibility of households with employed stepparents, redefine assets, restrict eligibility when a recipient receives *any* other income, and more. Thus the long-range goal seems to be retrenchment of AFDC to its original, marginal, mothers' pension status.

The theme apparent in the AFDC revisions, and in the other Reagan welfare alterations, is the elimination of assistance for the working poor. The specific changes in AFDC eligibility are complemented by reductions in earned-income deductions and the imposition of a gross-income cap in the Food Stamp program. In both programs, tightened rules relating to strikers and new requirements of retrospective budgeting will make it more difficult for persons temporarily out of work to receive assistance. These changes are compounded by reductions in social services, notably day care, and by alterations in the calculation of income in other programs too.

These changes will eradicate the already limited commonality between the working and nonworking poor; they also will remove the minimal instances when working men and women who aren't poor will have occasion to seek public assistance. Let us recognize that this denial of assistance to persons who are working does *not* have a work-incentive effect. Similarly, the denial of benefits to the working poor does not assist low-wage employers, since benefits function as a supplement to the low wage rather than as an alternative to it. The Reagan reorganization is in fact an attempt to drive a permanent wedge between the working and the nonworking poor; the result is likely to be an intensification of all the problems that stem from the absence of commonality in program structures.

In the AFDC and Food Stamp programs, perhaps the most significant long-run change for continuing recipients will be the incorporation of "workfare" options and requirements. The move toward workfare needs to be recognized as a particularly unpleasant way of maximizing the visibility of program recipients. Workfare is a parody of employment and training. Studies conducted in sample projects have repeatedly demonstrated that workfare components in public assistance programs are not cost-effective, do not lead to employment or training, and only succeed in reducing program participation by increasing the demeaning nature of the public assistance experience. Training, support services, and income disregards—all reduced in the past year—are far more effective in encouraging work-force involvement. The preference for workfare should be understood as a means of labeling public-assistance recipients and parading the objects of our charity before us. The workfare component also plays a vital role in making the programs as undesirable as possible at the time they cease being available to the working poor, and persons are presumably forced to choose between work and welfare.

Finally, it is significant that so far Reagan's emphasis has been on program reduction and reorganization rather than on program elimination. This maintains the perception of program multiplicity and holds programs, apparently, in their static form. Reductions of expenditures are achieved by redefining what constitutes a poor person. The basic structure that has generated resentment remains in place, in a form

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that will continue to generate resentment. The multiplicity is retained, the limited areas in which the programs helped people find employment are further diminished, and the gap between public perception and reality is further increased.

THE COLLAPSE OF CONSENSUS around the welfare structure has been a predictable result of the shape of the structure. Poverty has ceased to be a threat for much of the population, and over time the willingness to pay for programs one will never need oneself will decline. Rather than attempting to respond to this problem, the Great Society and post-Great Society income-in-kind programs were structured in a manner that made sharp distinctions between recipients and nonrecipients. The lack of commonality then generated a myth of generosity that led to the presumption of program adequacy, to a process of invidious comparison, and to a sense of moral superiority among nonrecipients. The high visibility of receipt of these benefits led to the belief that the government programs were uniquely preferential. The determination to structure programs without providing a basis for permanent employment resulted in a deceptive multiplicity—and in a perception that all the many programs accomplished nothing at all. Thus the existing structure was shaped so as to virtually ensure that in time it would lose its popular support.

Our dilemma is clear. The programs are necessarily defective. They bear the seeds of ever-growing unpopularity. Their defense has become increasingly difficult and politically ineffective. With any degree of choice, we would not have structured them in their current fashion in the first place.

Two points need to be made. First, it is absolutely crucial, even when providing critical support, always to emphasize how the existing structure reflects stop-gap attempts to deal with particularistic problems of poverty while not dealing with the ways the economy generates and perpetuates poverty. Let us emphasize the inadequacy of the stop-gap response, and the reasons why it is inadequate.

Second, whenever the slogan of "Jobs or Income" has been raised, it has been possible for the political authorities to respond by providing income or in-kind benefits. Now our analysis suggests that over time inherent defects in the income structure will result in a climate of opinion in which all such benefits are dangerously vulnerable. The implication is that welfare strategy must focus primarily on entitlement to employment. Though we may have serious doubts about the likelihood and consequences of full employment in the present organization of production, the focus on employment would still seem to offer the best long-range prospects.

In short, at a time when liberal programs are under attack, we must take care to avoid the uncritical defense of flawed structures. The decline in public support for the programs is too important a phenomenon and can't be explained away. Rather, in welfare as in other areas, we should seek to analyze and gain an understanding of how liberal answers have tended to self-destruct, and find alternative ways that lack the same corrosive internal dynamics. □

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Fred Siegel

Race: The Missing Issue of 1980

In the months before the 1980 election when voters were asked what the number one issue was, they replied inflation/the economy. When they were asked what should be done, about half supported the balanced-budget proposals of Jimmy Carter, a little less than a third plunked for Kennedy's wage and price controls, and only one out of seven supported the "supply-side" proposals of the man who went on to a landslide victory. How was this possible? And how, despite the continuous decline in public respect for big business, was the most probusiness Administration in half a century swept into office? Let us try to unravel these crucial anomalies by looking, first, at the influence of the Moral Majority and the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) on the 1980 election.

The influence of such organizations as the Moral Majority has been more a projection of liberal fears than a reality. For those cosmopolitans who, in the all-too sincere words of a friend, "thought all those questions were settled," the shock of a New Right, which had been active for some time, led to an extraordinary credulity. The fascist beast, it seemed, was in our midst after all. When TV evangelist Pat Robertson boasted that "we have enough votes to run the country," he was taken literally by cowed liberals. Robertson's claims and others like them seemed to be confirmed by the early analysis of pollster Louis Harris, who attributed the Reagan win to the power of the electronic preachers. But the estimates of the preachers' influence were wildly exaggerated.

Figures given in such authoritative sources as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and UPI suggested weekly audiences of 115–130 million viewers. But as William Martin pointed out in a classic piece of debunking, the carefully calculated Nielson rating suggested audiences of 7–10 million, most of whom were members of conservative churches. Moreover, in the eight months before the election when the preachers were supposedly reshaping the polity, their ratings were sharply declining. On election day, as Seymour Martin Lipset pointed out in the March 1981 *Commentary*, "A slightly smaller percentage of born-again white Protestants (61 percent) than of other white Protestants (63 percent) actually voted for Reagan . . . [and] Carter lost less support among his fellow born-again Protestants than among others." The New Right Moralists, Lipset suggests, may even have hurt the Republicans in that "the country had moved farther to the right on regulatory issues than on moral ones where trends are ambiguous."

What of the NCPAC hit squads that went after liberal senators? Here again, wild exaggeration. The great liberal oaks—McGovern, Church, Bayh, Culver—were all far more liberal than the areas they represented. Their states had all gone for Republicans in every presidential race since 1964. The distorting effect of Watergate was to give these men a reprieve in '74 when the conservative shift was actually taking place, while exaggerating the degree of rightward drift in '80. They were undermined by the collapse of liberalism and not by NCPAC, which was roundly criticized by Steven Simms and Dan Quayle, the men who beat Church and Bayh, as having been counterproductive. Even the conservative Heritage Foundation report on "Trends in the 1980 Congressional Elections" argues that NCPAC faces a growing backlash. Without NCPAC it's unlikely that any of these men, except Church, could have survived.

The only groups whose political clout was proba-

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bly genuine were the antiabortionists. In Missouri, where a NCPAC assault was not combined with the efforts of the antiabortionists, Thomas Eagleton survived the election despite a 9 percent jump in support for the Republicans. The difference between NCPAC and the antiabortion groups is that while NCPAC draws on and appeals to the conservative faithful, antiabortion groups draw on middle-of-the-road Democrats, many of whom are attracted to the Republicans largely on the antiabortion issue alone. These antiabortion Democrats had been "reformed" out of the party. They were one of a number of traditional constituencies floating around unattended that were pocketed by the Republicans.

IF THE NEW RIGHT preached mainly to the converted, can the election be explained largely in terms of economic downturn? Exit polls make it clear that voters who said that their economic fortunes were on the decline were far more likely to vote for Reagan. But if Carter's unpopularity was based so directly on the economy, how do we explain his primary victories over Ted Kennedy? Carter won primary after primary while presiding over a deepening slump, with 20 percent inflation and 20 percent interest rates.

In Indiana, the state where, in the '68 primaries, Bobby had brought together the black and blue-collar coalition that had electrified a good deal of the left, Ted Kennedy, in '80, concentrated his by then smoothly running campaign in such towns as Anderson, where high interest rates and declining car sales had led to the shutdown of the two largest factories and a 25 percent unemployment rate. Yet, after some dramatic and seemingly effective campaigning directed squarely at the menace of unemployment, Kennedy lost every precinct in Anderson to Carter. Kennedy's best showings came after the Illinois primary, when Carter had the nomination sewed up and a ballot for Kennedy could be cast as a protest vote.

Kennedy's problem was not just the Ayatollah or the media, which perniciously ambushed the most principled of the brothers as part of a misdirected effort to make up for their earlier, often uncritical stance on Jack and Bobby. Before Roger Mudd's interview, before the Iranian crisis, ward leaders unaffected by Kennedy's glow were reporting his surprising weakness among working-class and middle-class Catholics, describing him as "extremely unpopular." This was in part caused by Chappaquiddick and his lack of flair when compared to his flamboyant brothers; but there was more to it than that. Polls indicated that a great deal of his seemingly large support was "soft." Even within his own party he aroused what the pollsters call a high unacceptability quotient: there were people who would not vote for him under any circumstances. Some of them were Catholic antiabortionists, like the man who snapped, "He's a Catholic, he ought to know better."

Kennedy didn't seem to realize, somewhat to his credit, that, for the time being, after the shattering events of 1968 the coalition of blacks and blue-collar Democrats on which his brothers had thrived was no longer possible. The civil rights movement, in a way, now was in the government and tied to Carter by patronage if not affection. White ethnics, now better off economically and more jaded politically than when the Kennedy legend was created, were stung by quotas, busing, and rising crime; they saw little reason to link themselves to a candidate who had championed government intervention on behalf of black causes.

IF THE REPUBLICANS weren't swept in on a tide of conservative sentiment and if the economy was less of a direct factor than it was supposed to be, we have to turn to what was hidden and virtually undiscussed about the election—questions of race and government—to explain the Democratic collapse.

Students of the election, such as William Schneider, writing in the American Enterprise Institute's publication (1981) *The American Elections of 1980*, and Gerald Pomper of Rutgers University, in *The Election of 1980: Reports and Interpretations* (Pomper, ed., Chatham House, 1981), contend that what was most notable about the pattern of returns was the "consistency of results across the country." Reagan won everywhere, in areas prospering as well as declining; so, concludes Schneider, "the most prominent single characteristic of the 1980 election was the universal decline in support for the Democrats."

But that decline was not universal; one group, black Americans, sensing what Reagan represented, stood alone, isolated, as they had not been for 20 years. Their vote for Carter actually increased slightly, while the Democratic vote among all whites dropped by 8 points to 40 percent. (It dropped 16 points among Hispanics, 11 among Roman Catholics, and 21 among Jews.)

In a sense, the election results were foretold in first the Bakke and then the Weber Affirmative Action cases. Virtually every ethnic group in the country filed briefs on behalf of Bakke, while in the

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Weber case the challenge to union seniority and the possibilities for corporate manipulation presented by Kaiser Aluminum's Affirmative Action program drew rank-and-file fire around the nation.

By the mid-70s the underpinnings of the racial reformation, a belief in the efficacy of social science, the moral pageantry of the civil rights movement, and the sense of a debt to people unjustly oppressed had largely dissolved. The frightening growth of street crime, the replacement of the civil rights mystique with bureaucratic muscle, and the decline of public institutions ranging from prisons to schools—all this after a quarter-century of social engineering—left reformers and radicals alike on the defensive. In the '60s the black movement had benefited from the radical cultural criticism that had challenged established institutions; but by the late '70s the genuine successes of the Great Society in reducing poverty were increasingly overshadowed by a social pathology that spread in the wake of the "the Age of Aquarius."

The simultaneous growth of a black middle class and of a desperate underclass that was apparently beyond redemption ripped apart the arguments for social reform at both ends. The visible success of college-educated blacks seemed to belie the need for government protection, while the fear of lumpen criminals undercut feelings of sympathy for the plight of the worst off. Or, as Jules Feiffer put it sarcastically, "We need a better class of victims."

The clear-cut issues of the '60s were increasingly clouded by the growth of competing groups—women, Hispanics, the handicapped, gays—who also claimed victimized status for themselves and the right to government-supported redress. At the same time the arrival of new immigrants, many of them dark-skinned, who seemed to be prospering relative to the mass of poor blacks, reinforced the old arguments that the poor are so because they choose to be. Why, asked one of my white students in a class of trade unionists, are Jamaicans so successful? Before I could talk about the selective nature of the migration, a second student, a black himself and a fairly recent arrival in New York from North Carolina, asked if it was fair for Jamaicans to get jobs set aside for American minorities—to which one of the white students replied with *Schadenfreude*, "well, now you're getting a taste of your own medicine."

BLACK INTERESTS were increasingly looked upon as just that—one of a number of bureaucratically protected claims, without any exceptional call on one's moral obligations. A hint of racism began to slip back into the private discussions of middle-class liberals and even former '60s radicals when they spoke of the black lumpen they had come to fear. And though this was generally accompanied by praise for hard-working black yeomen, it was tinged as well by annoyance with the rhetorical excesses of black leaders who were always calling for the government to do more at a time when the government didn't seem able to carry out its basic functions effectively. The same government that was unable to halt inflation, or free the hostages, or aid the victims of Love Canal was, in contrast, able to sweep into a school district with a court order to prosecute an all-boys choir or require large-scale busing even if there was little public support for it. This disparity was more than most liberals and middle-of-the-roaders were willing to bear.

In Los Angeles and Maryland, areas once liberal strongholds were shifted rightward by the protracted conflict over court-ordered busing. But even areas not touched directly were affected. "The frightening difference between a court action and a political action," said Richard Neely in his engaging defense of judicial activism, *How Courts Govern America*, "is that the courts give no warning." A federal ruling on violent teen-agers made in bucolic Idaho can be applied suddenly by a judge in embattled Cleveland or Canarsie.

Carter was almost a helpless bystander in all this, hurt by the issues that had brought him to power. Where once as candidate for governor he had agitated for busing he was now being singed by the fires he had stoked.

Watergate, in the long run, had only fueled the fires of discontent with a government that seemed alternatively a rogue elephant wandering loose across the countryside and a passive bystander to the great events affecting the country. On matters of grave national importance such as oil and OPEC, Carter's Administration turned in circles like a giant ship whose rudder was stuck. But however feeble it was in dealing with the sheiks, it managed to threaten Iowa's enormously popular six-woman basketball team with the possibility of a sex discrimination suit, thereby undercutting both itself and women's rights. The result was a sharp drop in the already low estimate held of '60s programs. As Kathleen Frankovic pointed out in her article on "Public Opinion Trends" (part of Pomper's collection, *The Election of 1980*), between January '78 and November '80 the percentage of voters describing '60s programs as having made things worse jumped from 14 to 20 percent. Fully 62 percent of those surveyed thought that the

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programs either had no effect or had made things worse, while only 30 percent of all races thought they had made things better.

Since the 1980 election, there has been a good deal of discussion about whether, as Pomper puts it, the Democrats suffered from a lack of "ideas." If by ideas he means the ability of a party to give a coherent account of its course, then, indeed, the Democrats did suffer from this lack. Without the benefit of a coherent party capable of being responsive to voters and of providing a forum for debate and internal conciliation, Carter was operating without a clear sense of priorities, often merely appeasing the constituencies that hounded him most.

It was Hubert Humphrey and not George Wallace who warned Carter that there had been a total breakdown of the bureaucracy. "The federal regional offices," Humphrey told President Carter, "are zilch. . . . The best thing to do would be to get rid of all these people." And it was Secretary of HEW Joe Califano, a self-described bureaucratic son of the '60s, who sounded like a neoconservative when he complained that

> Intricate federal regulations . . . encourage even lengthier and more specific rules as state, local, and private institutions scramble to comply. . . . People trying to help each other feel suffocated, frustrated . . . as their freedom to act on matters they face each day is increasingly circumscribed.

Stuart Eizenstat, Carter's chief domestic adviser, was as troubled as Califano. Most public contact with government, he said, came through the Post Office and the IRS; "if these agencies foul up, it has grave and widespread public repercussions." And, he concluded sadly, foul up they did. If key liberals felt this way, is it any wonder that Reagan was able to convince so many Americans that if they looked down their gunsights they would see all the domestic problems along a single line, labeled Big Government?

The obvious contrast between the good life in official Washington—which was there well before Nancy's dinnerware problems—and the decay of our older cities and suburbs made it easy for Reagan to appeal to the worst instincts of the work-a-day citizen. Taxes, as Bob Kutner and others noted, have become increasingly regressive. The gradual elimination of the corporate income tax, ever burgeoning Social Security taxes, the huge mortgage deductions of the wealthy, and the rising sales taxes have shifted the burden of government revenue-raising onto the backs of salaried and wage-earning workers who are unable to dodge the tax code. And so middle-income earners, such as the UAW tax rebels in Flint, who through the effects of tax-bracket creep were being asked by the Democratic Congress to finance government, saw this government as increasingly remote from their interests, and unable to come to grips with the inflation that was taking money from their pockets. The Republicans played upon the widespread anger over taxes, and it's no wonder that throughout the country, and particularly in the Northeast, Reagan's major primary gains over Ford came from middle-income families with salaries between $15,000 and $20,000 a year.

If the declining economy weakened blue-collar support for the Democrats, it was the gap between the oversold promises of social reform and the day-to-day dystopian functioning of the courts and the schools that provided the opening through which the Republicans marched.

THE RACE ISSUE never appeared on the surface of the campaign because Reagan was able to quietly reap what Wallace and Agnew had sown. He stood on "high ground," campaigning in favor of economic growth, a strong defense. Moreover, he covered himself against accusations of racism by campaigning among blacks, less to secure their votes than not to lose white moderate ones.

Big business has trouble selling under its own label. Ever since the 1930s, when Al Smith and the Liberty Lobby were making goo-goo eyes at each other, shrewd conservatives have dreamed of uniting social and economic conservatives. They failed, in part because of the religious and ethnic divisions between the sticks and the slums, Protestants and Catholics. But as these older antipathies subsided and racial justice became the storm center of American politics, a hitherto impossible unity was achieved in the common response of both Main Street and street-corner conservatives to black advances and the government power behind those advances. It was Reagan's political genius to take advantage of that new unity to piggy-back a program of obeisance to business onto the often racially based social issues. As Paul Weyrich put it bluntly, "We talk about issues that people care about, like gun control, abortion, taxes, and crime. Yes, they're emotional issues, but that's better than talking about capital formation."

When Reagan talked about "getting the government off our backs," his message meant different things to different audiences. Of the 65 percent of the voters who thought there was too much busi-

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ness regulation, only a small percentage were businessmen. Reagan's call may have meant an end to OSHA for a manufacturer, but for many mainstream whites it meant an end to busing and quotas. Whites aware of liberal racial etiquette as preached on television are loath to express themselves when questioned. But get a chance to talk casually with most Northern ethnic voters, and they will tell you what the trained ears of the political scientists were unable to pick up. When Reagan said the problem with the economy was inflation and the source of inflation was excessive social spending, he was telling the voter that, in the words of a Brooklyn character, "there would be no more free ride for the blacks."

Many workers and middle-income whites didn't buy the spiked Kool-Aid Reagan was selling but still couldn't bring themselves to vote for Carter. A third of Carter's '76 supporters switched to Reagan but, as William Schneider points out, *the Democrats lost more voters to abstention than to Reagan and Anderson combined.* "Former Carter voters were four times more likely than Ford voters to sit out the campaign." In sum, Carter managed to retain only a little more than a third of his '76 supporters. The election then was a Democratic debacle rather than a Republican triumph.

Richard Scammon has quipped that there is nothing wrong with the Democrats that a 12 percent unemployment rate can't cure. He is partly mistaken. Economic issues can take the Democrats only so far. If the Democrats do ride back into power on the back of Reagan's ineptitude, they will find that the principles raised by such issues as busing and the power of the courts, Affirmative Action, and the rights of individuals will still be there.

In a society in which the government is now, of necessity, at the center of national life, a democratic coalition of interest groups that is not tied together by some larger sense of community is bound to be torn apart again by the interest-group conflicts that led to its 1980 downfall. □

Coming

The Black Bourgeoisie Revisited

by Martin Kilson

Stephen Hart

Ethical Relativism, Left-Wing Politics

Americans think about ethical questions in two quite different ways: sometimes we are moralistic, while at other times we are libertarian and relativistic. Usually liberals and socialists tend to conceive of the moralistic, "old-fashioned" view of ethical questions as a conservative force. But in fact the assumption that all moral decisions are relative and subjective, while it is progressive when applied to such issues as homosexual rights and abortion, reinforces conservative views about economic life. Conversely, old-fashioned, moralistic thinking has progressive potentials to which liberals and socialists need to pay more attention.

Our conceptions of right and wrong color not only how we conduct our daily lives but also how we think about politics. We argue about particular ethical issues: nuclear weapons, Affirmative Action, homosexuality. But we also make assumptions about the nature of judgments about right and wrong, and especially about whether ethical standards are absolute or relative, objective or subjective, a public or a private matter.

Most Americans are not moral philosophers, and so their assumptions about these issues are often unspoken or ambiguous. Still, there are shared and pervasive assumptions. In interviews I have conducted researching the social implications of Christian faith in America today, I frequently encountered four assumptions that tended to go together and to be used in similar ways when the people I interviewed talked about political issues.

(1) People have to make their own, individual decisions, dictated by conscience, when confronting ethical issues. No human authority can reliably guide us as individuals, and sometimes we may have to disobey even the most legitimate authorities. Only when we make a voluntary decision do we act in a genuinely moral fashion and deserve credit for our actions. Often these views are felt to imply that our public policy should maximize possibilities for autonomous choice by minimizing legally imposed restrictions.

(2) We ought to apply general values to the situations we confront rather than blindly following

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specific rules. In order to decide if their actions are ethically right, we have to pay attention to the needs, capacities, and circumstances of particular individuals. In practice, then, it is hard to pass judgment on the actions of another person. This approach is frequently expressed in statements like this: "I personally don't believe in abortion, but I can't pass judgment on other people because their situation may be different from mine."

(3) Sometimes people speak in ways that seem to be based on a far more extreme assumption—the relativistic view that right and wrong can be established only in relation to the values held by a particular person or community and have no objective status beyond these limits. If two people hold different values, neither is more right than the other. Whereas the first view I described asserts only that we have to follow the light our conscience gives us, and not that there are no objectively right and wrong actions, this view asserts both. When we hear people say that value judgments "are just a matter of opinion," or are subjective (in contrast to facts, taken to be objective), we are hearing relativistic assumptions.

(4) Any or all of these three assumptions can go along with a fourth, which is the most pervasive of all. This is the view that making ethical decisions and value judgments is a private, subjective activity, undertaken separately by each individual. People's values are their own business (or a private affair between the person and his or her God), and it would be a kind of invasion of privacy to disagree with others, pass judgment on them, or call upon them to explain and defend their choices. This assumption is found in such statements as these: "I am in no position to make judgments on people"; "it's not my right to say how others should live"; or "you can live your life any way you want—that's your decision." Of course, nobody means such statements literally; there are restrictions on practical choices, spelled out in the criminal code, but in the realm of opinions and activities that don't violate the law, we are to pass no judgments on one another.

These views all seem modern and tolerant. They go against the more old-fashioned view that God gave us specific, absolute rules to live by that are known to the community. While the assumptions I have just described seem dominant, there are still some people—often pejoratively called "moralistic" or "self-righteous"—who think they know some universally valid rules, and that they have the right to question others' ethical decisions. Whenever people describe other people's actions or public policies as "morally wrong" or say that we need to "take a stand" on some issue, they are implicitly making assumptions contrary to the "modern" ones just described.

The tension between these two ways of thinking about ethical judgments is not just a tension between religion and secularity, although evangelical Protestants and traditional-minded Catholics do have some tendency to think in "old-fashioned" ways. Secular ethical thought obviously contains both relativistic and absolutistic positions, and the same is true of Western religious traditions. American Protestantism, in particular, has contained this tension from the outset. On the one hand, Protestants have often felt called upon to make the world correspond better to God's will; this impulse has given Protestantism its socially dynamic but often missionarizing and coercive tone. Protestants, on the other hand, have been strongly influenced by the idea that each person is accountable only to God and to his or her conscience, and can receive guidance in matters of faith and ethics directly from God. I have interviewed many evangelicals who draw on this idea and take as relativistic a position as any secularist, in spite of their theological conservatism.

II

ON MANY ISSUES, "modern" thinking helps support liberal, progressive attitudes. Among those I interviewed, it gave strong support to values of tolerance and diversity. Many, for instance, found abortion personally abhorrent but wouldn't pass judgment on others, or felt sure that abortion was wrong but didn't want it made illegal. Similarly, many expressed reluctance to pass judgment on homosexuals. Religious freedom and civil liberties in general benefit from the influence of "modern" ethical assumptions. A new organization, People for the American Way, formed to combat what it calls the Religious New Right, articulates these implications well: it "stands for pluralism, diversity, tolerance of differing opinions."

There is, however, another side to the story. In the first place, relativistic and subjectivistic assumptions tend to impoverish public life by inhibiting people from applying ethical values to the question of how collective—and particularly economic—life should be organized. If making value judgments is a private business, or such judgments have no objective validity, how are we to argue with each other about what values ought to inform public decisions? How can we agree on purposes

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beyond maximizing individual well-being, or decide what means are ethically legitimate (not just technically effective) for achieving these purposes? Can we even see collective institutions as more than unfortunate makeshifts?

All our major institutions, of course, presuppose that we act according to specific rules, that we are not relativistic in practice, coerce people (if necessary) to do what is required of them, and hold people accountable for their decisions. Probably few Americans are anarchistic enough to believe that things could or should be otherwise. But on "modern" ethical assumptions, these features of collective life could not be justified except on the crassest practical basis, as a necessary if unfortunate means of attaining our ends as individuals. Only purely voluntary cooperation would be intrinsically valuable and have an ethical basis. To the extent that we think in this way, we apply our ethical ideals only to private life and our one-to-one relationships with others, and not to the public domain. Debates on public policy then take place in terms of the technical means by which the sum of individual wants can best be satisfied. If the left were to accept such restricted terms for debate, it would seriously impair our ability to articulate any vision more radical than the welfare state. Furthermore, if one thinks that ideally people should have complete autonomy in their decisions and do not owe each other any accounting for them, one can easily conclude that there should be few mandatory public constraints on what people do in the economic domain. Most of the economic conservatives I interviewed took this position, favoring the rights of private enterprise, because they saw them as a form of freedom. Many felt government regulation of economic life to be a restriction on individual freedom, and some even argued for charity over welfare-state programs as a way to let sharing be a genuinely ethical choice. Thus conservative, individualistic economic views can be justified as an extension of "modern" ethical thinking.

A less explicit but perhaps even more important influence of modernist ethics can be seen in the assumptions most Americans make when they think about the choices consumers make in the marketplace. These choices, we tend to assume, are of equal validity: if you go to a movie and I watch television, we are not likely to argue with each other about who made the more virtuous choice. Such decisions express our individual tastes and needs. Similarly, for someone to claim that snowmobiles squander resources that ought to be devoted to more pressing human needs would seem moralistic, authoritarian, unrealistic, and almost heretical: the market responds to the sum of individual, private, unaccountable desires, rather than to self-conscious collective decisions.

Everyone, of course, realizes that economic life necessarily involves constraint: most of us work with others, and under external control. But after work, we buy what we want, bring our purchases home, to the private place where we can do exactly what we wish; it is when we are least involved with others that we feel most free. These economic assumptions as well as the analogous ones found in "modern" ethical thinking are very strong in American culture, and they probably reinforce each other.

Among the people I interviewed, those with relatively old-fashioned styles of ethical thinking often seemed to be less vulnerable to the influences of relativistic economic assumptions. They often assumed that there are ethical absolutes that ought to govern economic life: that profits should be limited; that some things (health care and housing, for instance) should be provided on a nonprofit basis; that prices should be held at reasonable levels and workers paid a decent wage. Such views are certainly not a socialist program, but they indicate that people have a vision of social justice, want to subordinate the workings of the market to collectively agreed-upon ethical principles, and are willing to sacrifice some individual autonomy in economic matters. Leftists wish for a more sweeping transformation of economic life, but they too rely on "old-fashioned" ethical assumptions. The idea of "exploitation," for instance, is moralistic and judgmental.

The difference between "old-fashioned" and "modern" ethical assumptions is therefore not a difference between conservatives and liberals. Among those I interviewed, "old-fashioned" thinking frequently helped people think critically about American capitalism, but often at the cost of quite illiberal views on homosexuality, pornography, and abortion; people thinking this way were liberal on some issues but conservative on others. Other people had escaped from the rigidities of old moral codes but had lost all ways of asserting transcendent, objective standards that would have helped them resist relativistic ideas and judge the values that are institutionalized in American economic life.

Such outcomes, we may hope, are not the only possibilities: it may be possible to construct a view of life that is liberating in regard to minority life styles and individual sexual decisions but asserts an

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ethical vision for economic life. Often, however, the left fails to do that. For instance, when we support legal abortions with the "prochoice" argument that women have an absolute right to dispose of what is within their bodies, we risk accepting assumptions that can easily be used to support individualistic and conservative economic views. Sandra O'Connor's confirmation hearings last summer point to this tension. Some of those who opposed her said that abortion was not just one issue but a critical, disqualifying one. They explicitly referred to the controversy over slavery in the 19th century, saying that surely we would not have wanted to countenance the appointment of a Supreme Court justice who favored slavery. Their parallel is especially interesting because much of the movement to abolish slavery, like the antiabortion movement, was religiously motivated. People on the left are making a mistake, I believe, if they condemn O'Connor's opponents for being moralistic, or for wanting public institutions to be informed by what they consider central moral principles—although it is reasonable to say that where Americans have deep moral disagreements, imposing the majority will entails serious risks and costs, and we should therefore be very sure of what we are doing before using coercion.

It is also a mistake to say that abortion is a purely private matter. When we support minimum-wage laws, we argue that even if some workers find it to their benefit to work for very low wages rather than be unemployed, we will not permit them to do so. In this context, we take a public principle so seriously that we are willing to outlaw private agreements, entered into voluntarily and beneficial to all concerned parties; our legitimacy in making this argument may be undermined if we argue that abortion is a purely private matter. It is, finally, a worse mistake to say that abortion isn't a moral issue. Actually, I doubt that many of us really believe this: if we were making a personal decision about whether to have an abortion, most of us would probably at least think about ethical issues. So it would be better to articulate a persuasive moral argument, based on widely shared principles, to the effect that abortions are often justified. In short, we might do better to take on the right's moral arguments than to condemn it for being moralistic.

The issues about ethics I have here discussed can be deeply troubling for the left. In some ways, a welfare-state system unaccompanied by changes in the processes of production is a further step toward individual autonomy, rather than toward community, because it reduces our dependence on any person, group, or institution other than the state. Therefore, liberals may be able to value private choice in many spheres of life and argue for liberal economic policies, without great inconsistency. For socialists, the problems are more severe, because we usually want economic life to be a public arena, organized by self-conscious collective decisions; but we usually take the same policy positions as liberals on such issues as abortion and homosexual rights.

If we fail to think about these tensions, and to articulate a basis for our positions on issues such as abortion—a basis that is consistent with how we think about economic life—we may well reinforce values of private choice that we want to undermine. Furthermore, on economic issues we should make common cause with people who think in "old-fashioned" ways, taking advantage of the critical potential in such thinking. After all, socialism is in many ways quite a moralistic view of life; it rests on "old-fashioned" moral principles such as justice, compassion, community, and the equal value of every human being. □

Jeremy Weir Alderson

Sunbelt Psychosis

The day I knew, I mean really *knew* that I'd left Los Angeles was the day I heard a Syracuse weatherman giving the national weather extremes. "It's a beautiful 82 degrees in Waco, Texas," he said with the bouncy enthusiasm typical of his breed, "and in Duluth, Minnesota, they've got a kind of beauty all their own, a cold crystalline beauty at 14 below." I knew I wasn't in L.A., because in L.A. the weatherperson would have said something like, "It's a bone-chilling 14 below in Duluth," and the anchorperson would have segued in with a shuddering, "Brr . . . I'd rather be stuck on the freeway." Watching snow descend like a blessing on the fields beyond my window, I can't help but wonder at the Sunbelt psychosis that

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seems to have slipped even more silently over the American mind.

Time was when winter in the rural Northeast meant chopping wood for inefficient pot-bellied stoves that couldn't maintain "room temperature" in the uninsulated homes they were meant to heat, and people lived without tasting fresh vegetables for months at a time. What with going to the outhouse, there was no retreat from the cold, but there was an unavoidable retreat from society when traveling meant fighting biting winds a horse couldn't conquer. Oddly enough, though, it was just when conditions were this harsh, that the Northeast flourished. Now that we've got TVs, toilets, telephones, and transcontinental vegetables, the Northeast is depressed amidst a widening Sunbelt migration. To dismiss this as a merely political or economic phenomenon is to miss the parallel between this population shift and a more ominous shift amidst the darker currents of the national psyche.

FACING WINTER means facing the cruel face of nature and, beyond that, the cruel face of life itself. When the cold sears so severely that lying down means not getting up again, you can't kid yourself into believing we were all meant to cavort like little lambs enjoying the "don't worry about tomorrow" beneficence of the cosmos. The winter forces us to admit that the suffering implicit in the "God helps those who help themselves" struggle for survival is itself divine, and so prepares us to perceive the spring not only as joy but also as mercy. The ascendancy of the Northeast was synonymous with the ascendancy of America, because it reflected a national belief in the winter-induced ethos that the road to heaven isn't paved at all.

By contrast, the Sunbelt migration has had less to do with the true wisdom of warm geography than with dreams of ease that stretched from California's gold rush to Florida's gold coast with a few carefree retirements in between. The inherently destructive nature of these dreams bothered no one so long as the rainbow could abandon the wretchedness in its wake, till finally it had nowhere left to dangle its elusive pot of gold but a nonexistent realm of easy solutions no one could actually inhabit. In fitful desperation, the dreamers kept themselves asleep by imagining a kindly king presiding over this acid territory. Since there was no such person, an actor was hired to keep the fantasy real. We elected Ronald Reagan.

Ronald Reagan is Sunbelt all the way. His cloudlessly habitual smile knows no winter of discontent, nor, unfortunately, does it seem to know much else. The harsh realities of life? What does Ronald Reagan know about them? Take the food from the mouths of babes? It'll all work out . . . somehow, just as surely as tomorrow we'll all "have a nice day." Trouble is, the winter teaches that tomorrow isn't always nice.

It's at the coldest regions of the world that you find a preponderance of warm-blooded animals—seals, and polar bears, and penguins. It's in the hot regions that the reptiles take over. If our national priorities have gotten a bit cold-blooded under the Reagan administration, it's probably not a coincidence, and you may be sure that the state of the nation won't improve, until our Sunbelt psychotic hell freezes over. □

Richard Lourie

The Last Jew in Poland

Warsaw. The future.

Aron Aronson, 84 years old, was dozing in his armchair, dreaming of a slice of herring. He was aware that the herring wasn't real but it was better than dreaming of standing in line or of being hit on the head. A loud knock at his door brought Aronson back to reality, a small, dismal apartment on Miodowa Street.

"My name is Zbigniew Krasinski," said the man at the door. "I'm from the New Solidarity. I must speak with you."

Aronson let the young man in. He wore a worker's cap, had a long blond moustache, and kept glancing nervously out the window.

"Can I offer you some tea?"

"No thanks, there's no time. A new anti-Semitic campaign is starting up and we want you to join the presidium of the New Solidarity to show the West that we, the workers, are free of such unworthy sentiments."

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"Thank you very much, but join a presidium? That's a lot of work, sonny, and some days I don't even bother going out for the paper."

"You won't have to do much. A few meetings, a few interviews."

"I'll think it over."

"It's for the good of Poland."

Ten minutes after the young man had left, there was another knock at the door. This time it was a stout, middle-aged man wearing a dark-blue raincoat and carrying a small leather briefcase under one arm.

"My name is Zbigniew Lipinski. I am from the Communist party."

"Can I offer you some tea?"

"No, there's no time," said Lipinski, glancing nervously out the window."

"I know, I know," said Aronson. "You want me to join the Communist party."

"God forbid, another Jew in the Communist party!" said Lipinski, crossing himself. "Nothing personal, Mr. Aronson, I'm sure you're a fine man. No, we want you to join the secret police."

"Let's get serious here. The secret police, that's a strenuous life—clubbing workers, shooting miners, ransacking apartments."

"No, no, you wouldn't have to *do* anything. Just be present at a few arrests."

"But for what?"

"The party needs to blame the most recent failures on the secret police. Neither you nor I can do anything about Polish anti-Semitism, Mr. Aronson, the best we can hope for is to put it to work for a good cause. When people hear that Poles have been arrested by a certain Colonel Aron Aronson of the secret police, they can be trusted to draw the proper conclusions."

"I'll have to think it over."

"It's for the good of Poland."

Ten minutes later there was another knock at the door. Aronson opened it and saw a man with sideburns, wearing an imported suit.

"Wait, don't say a word," said Aronson. "You're from the secret police, you don't want tea, but you do want me to join the Communist party."

"Pretty good," said the man after introducing himself as Zbigniew Dzherzhinsky. "Two out of three. But I want you to join the New Solidarity."

"You do? Why?"

"To prove that they have connections with Zionist organizations whose only interest is the overthrow of socialism in Poland."

"Who would be foolish enough to believe that?"

"Watch it, Aronson, this is a serious matter. If we don't blame Jews and foreign organizations, the Soviets will think we're abandoning socialism. And that will mean tanks. I wouldn't think a person of your origin would want to take on the role of Judas. I'll give you 24 hours to think it over," he said, throwing his cigarette on Aronson's floor and grinding it out suggestively.

Aronson thought it over. But it was all too confusing, and so he simply decided to join the New Solidarity because two out of three of them had wanted it.

He was just about to get ready for bed when there was another knock at his door.

"My name is Zbigniew Bryl and I'm from the ultrapatriotic organization called the Crowned Eagle and the Holy Virgin of . . . "

"Wait," interrupted Aronson. "We're both busy men. I'm joining the New Solidarity and that's settled."

"Miserly Jew," thought Bryl on the stairs, "didn't even offer me tea."

THE NEXT MORNING Aronson was boiling an egg. He had not been feeling well lately and realized that he was burning more calories standing in line in the cold than he was getting from the food he actually received. At this rate, I will cease to exist by late March, calculated Aronson.

There was a knock at his door. It was the young man from the New Solidarity again.

"Listen, we've just learned that there's a power struggle going on between the party and the secret police. Anti-Semitism is going to be one of the chief weapons. So, our position has changed. We want you to join the secret police."

"But why?"

"Don't you see, the inevitable anti-Semitism will be directed against the worst elements in our society."

"Fine, but what will happen to me?"

"You? I'm sure the party will let you emigrate when it's all over."

"But then there'll be no Jews left in Poland."

"It doesn't matter. Polish anti-Semitism is very exalted and romantic and does not require the actual presence of actual Jews," said the young man.

"You'll excuse me for a moment. If my egg gets overcooked, it's almost impossible for me to digest."

"Is there a back door to this place? I see a party man coming."

Aronson let the young man out the back door and was hurrying to the stove when he heard

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another knock. Let them wait, he thought. First he would turn off the gas. But suddenly the gas went off by itself, followed, a second later, by the electricity.

"I'm sorry I can't offer you any tea," said Aronson to the party official. "My gas just went off."

"The Soviets are shutting off our gas for ten minutes today to remind us that we're at their mercy. You're going to have to join the New Solidarity immediately."

"But they don't want me anymore."

"Those disgusting anti-Semites! Why not?"

"I can't remember. It's too complicated. You'll excuse me, I've got to eat my egg. I'm starting to feel a little light-headed."

"Doesn't Poland mean more to you than an egg?"

"It's just that . . . "

"Wait, there is one other possibility. You could join one of those ultranationalistic organizations. Then we can smash the New Solidarity using the people in the secret police who also belong to those ultrapatriotic groups. Then, of course, we would smash that element of the secret police by exposing their antisocialist ties. You see?"

"See? I can't even find my egg in the dark."

"Forget your stupid egg. The obvious first step is for you to go immediately to St. Mary's church and ask to be baptized by Father Zbigniew Dubinski. Then, once you've been baptized, you can join . . . "

"Wait one second," said Aronson. "I have a few demands of my own. I want to have enough food so I don't feel like fainting. I want electricity. I want to live more or less like a human being."

"You ungrateful, self-serving Jew, where do you think you are, Ecuador? Get over to St. Mary's as fast as those legs of yours can carry you. The egg can wait."

"But . . . "

"No buts, Aronson. I'd advise you not to incur the wrath of the Polish Communist Party at such a key moment in history."

Aronson bowed to the logic of history and put on his overcoat, which had also seen better days.

In all his 84 years Aronson had never set foot inside a Catholic church. He would no more enter a church than a ladies' room, and for the same reason—they were for somebody else.

Aronson saw a line of people in front of the altar. Each person in the line stopped in front of the priest and opened his mouth. The priest would put something in each mouth. It must be part of the Catholic relief effort he had read about in the paper, thought Aronson getting into line.

People were giving him funny looks. The bloody Jesuses on the wall were not helping matters and hunger made his knees feel like air.

When his turn came, Aronson opened his mouth to ask if the priest were Father Dubinski but, before the first word was out, the priest had placed a small wafer in his mouth.

"Is that all you get?" asked Aronson. "No soup? Not even an egg?"

"What's the matter with you?" asked the man next to him in line.

"This is what you call Catholic relief?" said Aronson. "If I'm going to join, you'll have to give me more than a little wafer. An egg, a sandwich, something."

"What do you mean join?" asked the man beside Aronson.

"I was ordered to join the Catholics by the Communists because I'm a Jew."

"A Jew!"

"A Jew is taking communion!"

Pandemonium seized the church. But one peasant woman kept her wits about her. Crossing herself, she pulled a large, dirt-encrusted beet from her shopping bag and hurled it at Aronson's head. Her aim was sure. He fell to the ground.

Within minutes a special party ambulance had pulled up in front of the church. The secret police cleared the sidewalks while the army was busy blocking off the route to the hospital. A team of attendants lifted Aronson from the ground and carried him with exquisite caution to the ambulance.

"An egg . . . electricity . . . a decent life . . . " moaned Aronson as reporters from three newspapers took down his every word.

"You see that?" hissed one man in the crowd to another. "In Poland, Jews are always given preferential treatment." □

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Dennis Wrong

The Cold War: Postrevisionism

RUSSIA'S ROAD TO THE COLD WAR, by Vojtech Mastny. New York: Columbia University Press. 409 pp. $16.95.

STALIN'S AMERICAN POLICY: FROM ENTENTE TO DETENTE TO COLD WAR, by William Taubman. New York: W. W. Norton. 291 pp. $18.95.

STRATEGIES OF CONTAINMENT: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF POSTWAR AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY, by John Lewis Gaddis. New York: Oxford University Press. 432 pp. $25.00.

The term "cold war" has long referred to American-Soviet relations since the Second World War, but beyond that there has been little consistency in its usage, even on how to set it in type. When capitalized, "the Cold War" usually means the period of maximum hostility between the superpowers nearly 30 years ago and the events leading up to it. Some writers regard the conflict as having lasted until the Nixon-Kissinger détente of the early '70s, only to break out anew with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 or the rhetorical belligerence of the Reagan administration in the past two years. Others write in lowercase of "the cold war," treating it as a more or less permanent condition in the absence of either general disarmament or the unambiguous world hegemony of one of the antagonists, though subject to shifts of locale and changes of mood. Nor is there agreement as to exactly when it all began. Should it be dated from the disputes over the implementation of the Yalta agreements, especially with reference to Poland? From Kennan's "long telegram" in early 1946 and Churchill's Fulton, Missouri, speech a few weeks later? Or only from congressional approval of the Truman Doctrine in early 1947? Disagreements over chronology have often reflected deeper ideological differences and partisanship.

The "revisionist" historians of the 1960s challenged the then-prevailing official and scholarly view that American policy toward the Soviet Union had originated in a defensive response to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and threats to the independence of non-Communist nations bordering on the enlarged Soviet empire. Opposition to the war in Vietnam gave enormous resonance to cold-war revisionism as protesters against the war broadened their target to include American foreign policy as a whole. The conservative columnist George Will certainly exaggerated in charging recently that the Democratic party in the early 1970s embraced the revisionist version of the cold war, but this version became widely accepted in the universities, especially those where student activism was greatest. The student antiwar movement may have had only a transitory effect on American foreign policy, but many of its followers went on to pursue academic careers and eventually to win tenure. Today one often encounters the claim that revisionism has become a near orthodoxy on the campus, even among professional historians.

Yet there have been no significant additions to the corpus of revisionist scholarship since the early 1970s, apart from a few essays by William Appleman Williams, the acknowledged dean of the school. These essays are not based on new research and do no more than reiterate his interpretation of

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the United States as an inherently expansionist capitalist society pursuing a relentless drive for overseas markets. Not a single revisionist has taken advantage of the 1974 Freedom of Information Act, which has made a prodigious quantity of new material from official sources available to scholars. Two of the revisionists, Gar Alperowitz and Gabriel Kolko, have evidently turned away from the study of international relations to other areas. Another, David Horowitz, who was a radical journalist rather than an academic, has changed his view of the American-Soviet conflict and now condemns the left's long-standing "blind spot toward the Soviet Union." Except for a few polemical responses solicited by the *Nation*, revisionist writers have ignored Robert James Maddox's *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War*, published in 1973, which documented in painful detail the careless and biased use of sources in the major works of revisionist historiography.

An entire new canon of scholarly works on the cold war from its origins up to the present has been produced in the last decade to which the three books here under review make a major contribution. William Taubman (following Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.) describes this body of work as "post-revisionist," including under that label an earlier book by Gaddis, Mastny's study (published in 1979) to which Taubman's own book is in some ways a sequel, and books by Daniel Yergin on American policy toward the Soviet Union in the immediate postwar period and by Robert Dallek on Roosevelt's foreign policy. He sees the postrevisionists, including himself, as superseding both the revisonists and the "traditionalist" historians who preceded them. Not that the postrevisionists take as their point of departure the claims of the revisionists and then proceed to reject them: for the most part they simply ignore and bypass them, obviously finding no credibility in the fetishism of economic interests that dominates revisionist writings and aware of Maddox's exposé of their shoddy scholarship (which had been remarked upon earlier by Henry Pachter in the pages of *Dissent*).

The revisionist school may be moribund, but it is not altogether clear exactly whom or what its members were supposed to be revising. Taubman names George Kennan in his early essays on American diplomacy and American-Soviet relations as well as W. W. Rostow as "orthodox or traditionalist" historians of the origins of the cold war (or "Cold War," as he has it). Kennan was, of course, himself a major policy-maker in the early Truman administration and his role as chief architect of the turn toward resistance to Soviet pressures and demands emerges even more saliently than before in the accounts of Taubman and Gaddis. But Kennan has also been described as the "first revisionist," for as early as 1949 he was criticizing what he saw as the excessive militarization of the containment policy he had articulated as well as its unwise extension to parts of the world outside Europe and the Far East where postwar boundaries had been fixed by treaty or agreement. Long before his present support for nuclear disarmament, for over 30 years in fact, Kennan has been a "dove" rather than a "hawk" with respect to most cold-war confrontations. Having worked for him as a research assistant in 1951–52 during his first venture into scholarship before his brief ambassadorship to the Soviet Union, I came to know his views on a wide range of subjects. In retrospect, many of them were extraordinarily prescient about the future shape of world affairs, but they were rooted in a conservative realism and "elitism," utterly alien to the Marxist and economic determinist leanings of the revisionists.

The main target of the revisionists was less a record and interpretation of events produced by historians than the popular demonological view of the cold war as a struggle between a righteously aroused America and an evil Communist foe centered in Moscow but directing global forces bent on ultimate world domination and the extinction of freedom—what came to be called "the cold-war ideology" by its critics. This stark vision, exploited by such demagogic politicians as Joseph McCarthy for narrow domestic political aims, began to lose plausibility after the death of Stalin, the end of the Korean War, and the affirmation of "peaceful coexistence" by Stalin's successors. The rise of the New Left in the early 1960s brought the first revisionist histories, depicting the United States as the cold-war aggressor determined to use its postwar military superiority to promote the expansion of capitalism and override the legitimate anxieties of the Soviet Union about the security of its borders. If revisionism produced a highly ideological reading of the cold war, one that despite its independent origins bore at times a resemblance to official Soviet views, it nevertheless began as a counterideology that became persuasive to many after the American involvement in Southeast Asia. More recent events (as well as new information about the past) have cast into doubt virtually all of the revisionist claims except among a dwindling handful of radicals fixated on the '60s. At the same time, the initial efforts of the Reagan administra-

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tion to revive the old bipolar cold-war dogmas of the '50s have failed to win much favor even with the general public, let alone among intellectuals and professional historians.

Walter Laqueur recently observed that the revisionist picture of the cold war was like a film of a boxing match that focused on only one of the contestants, showing him jabbing, counterpunching and feinting as if he were shadowboxing against himself. The traditionalist view of the cold war tended to assume that Stalin cherished nearly unlimited expansionist goals, sometimes simply inferring a drive for world domination from scholastic perusal of Lenin's writings. Few efforts were made to explore the detailed record and evolution of Soviet policies in Eastern Europe, given the inaccessibility of Soviet documentary sources and the absence even of memoirs.

VOJTECH MASTNY'S *Russia's Road to the Cold War* is a pioneering effort to overcome these limitations and is likely to remain for a very long time—perhaps until the millennium when Soviet archives are opened—the major study of Soviet diplomacy from the German invasion of 1941 to the end of the Second World War in August 1945.

Mastny is a Czech emigré, educated at Columbia. He makes full use of recently opened Western archives, the few significant and available Soviet records such as Khrushchev's oral reminiscences, and, most fully and originally, East European sources, especially the records of the Czech and Polish resistance movements and governments-in-exile during the Second World War. He reconstructs virtually on a week-to-week basis the development of Soviet postwar aspirations and the deliberations at the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences, insisting throughout that "Stalin's goals should be considered as evolving rather than as a design firmly fixed and single-mindedly pursued" and that his "actual objectives" can be "reliably distinguished from lip service to the messianic tenets of the doctrine that is the minimal attribute of any Communist aspiring to good standing." Mastny's account of Czech-Soviet relations is particularly detailed, with Eduard Benës emerging as a well-meaning statesman who far exceeded even Roosevelt and Churchill at their most naïve in his illusions about Stalin and the Soviet Union, "fully substantiat[ing] charges by his wartime critics that Czechoslovakia was in effect offering itself as an instrument of Russian expansionism."

Mastny agrees with Gaddis's conclusion in *The United States and The Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (1972) that Stalin's dictatorial powers gave him greater freedom than the Western leaders had to avoid the eventual hostile confrontation. Gaddis's first book is now the standard history of the origins of the cold war, and Mastny's study excellently complements it by viewing the same events over part of the same period from the standpoint of the other, less accessible antagonist, the Soviet Union.

Mastny accepts neither the existence of boundless Soviet ambitions rooted in Marxist ideology nor the inevitability of the loss of all of Eastern Europe because of the advance of the Red Army in 1945. If the West had taken a firmer line sooner than it did, Poland certainly, Czechoslovakia probably, and Hungary possibly might have escaped Soviet domination and there could have been a different solution to the problem of Germany. "The ever more accommodating Western attitude toward a possible division of the continent into spheres of influence abetted Stalin's quest for power and influence." Yet Stalin was not entirely a *diabolus ex machina*: "In the last analysis," Mastny concludes, "his hands were tied by the Soviet system which had bred him and which he felt compelled to perpetuate by his execrable methods; that system was the true cause of the Cold War."

WILLIAM TAUBMAN is a specialist in Soviet foreign policy now teaching at Amherst. His book covers much more briefly the same ground as Mastny's and carries the record forward to Stalin's death in 1953 with a short concluding chapter on events up to the present and the recurring pattern he finds in them—the book's last sentence is "Stalin's American policy lives!" Taubman's title suggests misleadingly that his main subject is Stalin's foreign policy, but he actually discusses almost as fully American responses to Soviet initiatives and changes of line. Although he rejects as completely as Gaddis and Mastny the revisionist view that the cold war resulted from American challenges to the security of a war-shattered, defense-minded Soviet Union, he also moves away from traditionalist assumptions in underscoring and criticizing Washington's misperceptions and overreactions to Moscow.

Like Mastny—and, for that matter, Kennan at the time, despite his authorship of the containment policy—Taubman sees Stalin as a cautious, even fearful, essentially conservative world leader, "paranoid-defensive" rather than "paranoid-aggressive" in outlook, hardly the rational statesman

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motivated by enlightened self-interest of revisionist writings. But Western leaders, often against the advice of Soviet specialists Kennan and Charles Bohlen, took Stalin's bluffs and threats too seriously after 1947, having previously failed to take them seriously enough.

Taubman's major theme is the drama of the interplay between Stalin's false image of Western leaders and their mistaken conceptions of him. Stalin saw them projectively, assuming that they controlled their nations as totally as he did his and that they used democratic rhetoric just as cynically and manipulatively. Roosevelt and Churchill tended to regard Stalin as a reasonable man much like themselves underneath his gruff exterior. Later, Truman assumed too readily that Soviet deception and anti-American propaganda signified warlike intentions rather than the more limited aim of "expanded power and influence without war." Taubman's major conclusion is: "While some conflict was inevitable given East-West differences (in political and economic systems, in interests and ideologies), misperception aggravated and intensified the tension—misperception that often took the form of each side's projecting onto the other a warped image of itself."

I would unhesitatingly recommend Taubman's book as the best, short but comprehensive study of the cold war as a political conflict at the level of summit policy-making and diplomacy. It superbly combines diplomatic history with interpretation of the motives and perceptions of political leaders and does not shrink from critical evaluation. Covering the entire crucial period in American-Soviet relations from 1941 to 1953, it includes a concise but probing summary of what has changed and what has remained constant in the subsequent 30 years. The documentation meets the highest scholarly standards. At the same time, Taubman writes in a breezy, often colloquial style that makes his book eminently readable yet avoids the dreadful journalistic addiction to "colorful" illustration and portentous overdramatization that infects so much American writing on public affairs, even that of scholars.

GADDIS's *Strategies of Containment* is a sequel to his 1972 prize-winning book, picking up with events after 1947 and tracing American diplomatic and strategic policy toward the Communist world through the Carter administration. The book also partly complements Taubman's in its detailed examination of American policy, drawing voluminously on new declassified materials released under the Freedom of Information Act. *Strategies of Containment* (despite its uninspiring title) is engagingly literate. Gaddis quotes, for instance, Conrad's famous description from *Heart of Darkness* of a battleship firing into the African jungle to illustrate the futility of a particular American naval tactic in Vietnam. Far from bogging down in massive detail, the book is beautifully organized. It reads almost like intellectual history rather than a straightforward record of events, for Gaddis's primary concern is with rival strategic conceptions underlying American policy that have alternated in cyclical succession from the time of Kennan's long telegram and later "Mr. X" article until the present day.

Gaddis characterizes the two rival strategies that have dominated American policy since the onset of the cold war as "asymmetrical" and "symmetrical." Asymmetrical containment stands for a selective response to threat, limiting military resources and concentrating them against the major adversary as opposed to dispersing them in order to counter peripheral and "incremental" challenges. Symmetrical containment strives to respond in kind to the nature of the threat at the time when and the place where it emerges. Dulles's doctrine of "massive retaliation" on the one hand, and the Kennedy administration's commitment to "flexible response" on the other represent the extreme, "ideal-typical" versions of each strategy. As polar examples, they reveal the risks and limits of each: asymmetry threatens a terrifying escalation to all-out, even nuclear, war whereas symmetrical response was tested and, to put it mildly, found wanting in Vietnam.

Both policy options were debated as early as the Truman administration. Kennan's original formulation of containment was asymmetrical: as he has ceaselessly insisted ever since, he did not regard containment as primarily a military posture and he advocated it only for a few areas of the world vital to American interests. The rival view, envisaging global resistance to Communist expansion and permanent commitment to an arms race, was most fully presented in NSC–68, a report commissioned in 1950 by President Truman after Mao's victory in China and the Russian explosion of their first atomic bomb. Paul Nitze was chairman of the commission that drafted NSC–68 (to which Taubman also devotes a good deal of attention). "Debates over the future of containment," Gaddis notes, "tend to be little more than reruns of those between George Kennan and Paul Nitze three decades ago." Indeed, Kennan and Nitze are still central figures in the contemporary debate over arms control and nuclear policy.

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The difference between the two policies has always been one of emphasis rather than implementation. But Gaddis notes three later changes paralleling the shift from Kennan's 1947 view to NSC–68, each accompanying a change in the party controlling the White House: from NSC–68 to Eisenhower's "New Look" with its uneven combination of prudent moderation and frightening emphasis on nuclear weapons, next to the expanded commitments of Kennedy and Johnson, and then to the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente. The Carter administration interrupted this pattern by continuing détente.

Gaddis suggests that asymmetrical response appeals to fiscal conservatives and symmetrical response to Keynesian liberals, thus establishing a linkage between domestic and foreign policies. Here he transcends the old oversimplified contrast between external threat and internal imperatives that dominated the traditionalist-revisionist debate. The cold war and containment, to be sure, originated in response to Soviet postwar expansion, but since 1947 "to a remarkable degree, containment has been the product, not so much of what the Russians have done, or of what has happened elsewhere in the world, but of internal forces operating within the United States." The "internal forces" Gaddis refers to are not the machinations of big capitalists but the problems of managing the economy mediated by the electoral competition of the major political parties.

For all his sensitivity to domestic politics, even Gaddis, in common with nearly all other historians of the cold war, seems to me to give insufficient weight to the political weakness of the Truman administration during the period when the foundations of what is still the basis of American foreign policy were being laid. Truman was perceived almost universally as little more than a caretaker president to whom the job had fallen by accident, especially after the 1946 congressional elections when the Republicans won control of both houses of Congress, something they have succeeded in doing only once since then, in 1952, the year of Eisenhower's first landslide, and that by the margin of a single seat in the Senate. No later president, not Johnson in 1968, nor Ford in 1976, nor Carter in 1980—all of whom were given a respectable chance of winning reelection—has appeared as vulnerable as Truman in the last two years of his first, unelected term in office.

Yet 1947 and 1948 were the years of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the breaking of the Berlin blockade, and the beginning of the negotiations that resulted in the NATO alliance. Other momentous decisions whose consequences we are still living with were made in Truman's second term, some of them after Democratic losses in the 1950 off-year elections and the firing of General MacArthur in the spring of 1951, which made Truman's last 18 months in the White House almost as embattled as the years before his 1948 election victory. Dean Acheson did not exaggerate when he gave his memoirs the title "present at the creation," nor, at least in my estimation, when he called Truman "the captain with the mighty heart" in dedicating the volume to him. Acheson himself, in addition to his unquestioned intelligence, behaved with courage and dignity under intense pressure.

IT DOES NOT SEEM likely that there will be any sharp reversal of the judgment reached by these recent historians about the origins of the cold war, barring some tremendous Soviet archival revelation. No doubt much remains to be told on the Soviet side of the story, but it is almost as improbable as in the case of Hitler that evidence supporting a radically revised and more favorable assessment of Stalin's mind and character will come to light. And Stalin was not only the absolute ruler of Russia, but, as both Mastny and Taubman stress, he virtually monopolized the formulation of Soviet foreign policy, often keeping his closest associates in the dark about his real objectives.

"It is remarkable," Mastny remarks of the earliest impasses over the shape of the postwar world, "how much these events . . . already have the unmistakable air of another era. In pondering the thoughts and actions of the statesmen of the time, one cannot help noticing how small and simple their world was in comparison with ours." True enough, yet Gaddis's study of American policy since 1947 impresses one with the durability of containment and the exploration, as early as 1950, of nearly all the policy options that are still being

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debated today. Containment, he concludes, "has for all its contradictions, mutations, and irrationalities, been a surprisingly successful strategy: historians looking back on the post-World War II era are likely to rate it as one of the more stable and orderly of modern times, and to give the architects of containment no little credit." Gaddis thinks containment will continue, "given recent Soviet behavior," but ends on an unsatisfying if tantalizing note of doubt as to whether there might not be alternatives to the "unimaginative cycle" to which he has called attention. □

Mitchell Cohen

The Politics of the Powerless

PROPHECY AND POLITICS: SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND THE RUSSIAN JEWS, 1862–1917, by Jonathan Frankel. New York, Cambridge, and London: Cambridge University Press. 686 pp. $49.50.

"The working men have no country," reads a famous passage in *The Communist Manifesto.* "We cannot take from them what they have not got." Marx and Engels add that with its penetration of world markets, the bourgeoisie was universalizing capitalist relations of production, and in consequence, "National differences and antagonisms between peoples are vanishing daily more and more . . . ."

With the hindsight of 130 years, it is difficult not to recognize nationalism as one of the specters that are perennially haunting Marxism. Most "orthodox" Marxists, in the wake of Marx's and Engels's pronouncements, embraced a universalism that rejected national aspirations as ends in themselves. Taken to its logical consequence, this ultimately negates the idea of cultural pluralism. Karl Kautsky, in 1908, epitomized this tendency when he argued in *Nationalität und Internationalität* that with the education of the masses under socialism, the "universal languages" would become *linguae francae,* and "ultimately" the tongues of the smaller nations would disappear. The emergence of a "union of all civilized humanity" with "one language and one nationality" would ensue, "just as the peoples in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean were united in Hellenism after Alexander the Great, and the peoples of the western area later merged into the Roman nationality."

It was, no doubt, the multinational character of the Austro-Hungarian empire that helped impel such Austro-Marxists as Karl Renner and Otto Buer to interpret the national question in a manner differing from Marx, Engels, and Kautsky (who began his political career in the Austrian Social Democratic movement and reformulated his views of nationalism more than once). Bauer's classic, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1907), sought a *nonterritorial* definition of the nation as a *"totality of men bound together through a common destiny into a community of character."* Such a conceptualization allowed for advocating the cultural autonomy of various nationalities within one border.

The multinational character of the Czarist empire, however, did not lead Lenin to similar views: when the Bolshevik leader espoused the self-determination of a nation, it was never as an end in itself, but always a matter of tactics. Hence, despite Rosa Luxemburg's criticisms of him on this score, the two revolutionaries ultimately shared a common vision. Indeed, there is a rigorous logic to this vision: if classes are the sole true category for understanding social reality and if, consequently, the only real struggle is that of the classes, then nationalism and national contentions obfuscate what is really at stake.

Furthermore, inasmuch as Marx, Engels, and Lenin defined the state as a form of class rule—with the anticipated proletarian state withering away at the advent of the classless society—the birth of nation-states implied the creation of types of class rule, with nationalism as a new opiate for the masses. The Third Estate, which Abbé Siéyès claimed should be all in 1789, was not simply some 97 percent of the French population; it was a force at whose head stood the French bourgeoisie.

Today it would take an extraordinary blindness—or obtuseness—to look back at the events of the last 100 years, ranging from Bergen-Belsen to the anticolonial nationalist struggles of the Third World, and attribute them all to a peculiar cunning

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of class reason. As darkness engulfed Europe in 1940, Walter Benjamin chastised social democracy for dogmatically portraying progress as humanity's unbounded, irresistible development, something that "automatically pursued a straight line or spiral course" toward perfection.

Difficult questions must emerge from reflection on Benjamin's criticism and on the events of the years immediately after he penned it. Were nazism and the Holocaust simply warps on the continuum of that progress in which Marxists had placed so much faith, or do they imply something profoundly more frightening? Does technological progress imply the same for human relations?

The conclusion is, inescapably, that the varieties of human oppression must each be grasped and grappled with in their specificities, as well as within the larger totality of socioeconomic understanding that Marxism has done so much to provide. Given, for example, what happened to Jewry during World War II, reductionist class analysis simply cannot be sustained with integrity. On the contrary, the universal and the particular—and hence the international and the national—must be considered not as opposites but as fundamentally, and dialectically, interrelated.

IN JONATHAN FRANKEL'S masterly and meticulous new study, *Prophecy and Politics,* the question of the universal and the particular is posed in terms of the crisis faced by one people, the Jews, as they entered the 20th century, principally in Eastern Europe. Between the watershed year of 1881—when they were traumatized by vicious, widespread pogroms—and 1917, Russian Jews underwent a convulsive process that would ultimately sweep away the traditional world in which they lived.

Frankel strives to understand the reactions of the Jewish intelligentsia to these events, especially as it entailed thinkers and movements seeking a reconciliation between nationalist and internationalist claims. He begins with two precursors, Moses Hess, the German Jewish Communist and sometime companion of Marx and Engels, whose *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862) called for the creation of a socialist Jewish state in Palestine, and Aron Liberman, an exile from Vilna who in the 1870s, in London, founded the first avowedly Jewish socialist organization, the Hebrew Socialist Union. The author then turns his focus on Eastern Europe with a detailed examination of the impact of 1881 and 1905 on the intelligentsia and its role in the events of those years.

We follow the rise of Jewish political parties with socialist and national programs, such as the Jewish Labor Bund, the left Zionist Poale Zion ("Workers of Zion"), and the territorialists (who sought political and territorial self-determination for the Jews but not necessarily in Palestine). Frankel provides chapters on the ideas, roles, and dilemmas of various theorists of Jewish socialist nationalism (Nachman Syrkin, Chaim Zhitlovsky, Ber Borochov), and closes with an examination of Jewish socialist politics (largely spear-headed by Russian Jews) in pre-World War I Palestine and in America through the close of the Great War.

In his rich and suggestive reading of Jewish history, Frankel, who teaches at the Hebrew University, both builds on the prodigious scholarship that has been forthcoming (particularly from Israel) in the past two decades on Jewish socialism and nationalism, and undermines numerous hitherto commonplace assumptions. While the main locus of his book is Russia, its primary contribution lies in its synthesis of the events on three continents.

There is a historical stereotype that depicts Russia as the sole fount of Jewish socialism, the source from which its key characteristics flowed in other lands as well. In reality, a much more complex, multifaceted exchange of influences occurred, extending across borders and oceans. For example, traditional historiography of the Bund, that once powerful socialist (anti-Zionist) organization founded in 1897 in Vilna, sees its diaspora nationalist ideology developing, in Frankel's phrase, "inexorably as a superstructure reflecting the realities of the mass base." In other words, the orientation of the Bund, and its use of Yiddish as the medium for mass-organizing of Jewish workers (as opposed to the earlier tactic of teaching Russian to select circles of workers), represented a shift to a more specifically Jewish national outlook from internationalist or Russian ones.

Frankel demonstrates persuasively that this was not the case, that the Bund's decisions in theoretical matters were largely made from the top down and that numerous "political contingencies," including the success of Yiddish socialism *elsewhere* and the rising impact of Zionism, were important. In fact, Yiddish-speaking labor movements achieved success in New York and London (and also emerged in Moldavia, Galicia, and Congress Poland) *before* they did in the Czarist empire, and their literature was smuggled into Russia where its influence was substantial.

The program eventually articulated by the Bund was markedly similar to that later put forth by Bauer. It tried to balance not only universalist and

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particularist aspirations but also the real divisions within Bundist ranks on the question of the organization's national emphasis. The Bund's notion of Jewish self-determination under socialism was, in the final analysis, cultural, not political. The Jews did not require either their own territory or independent political institutions, but rather national cultural autonomy in the diaspora, with the Yiddish language as its vehicle and edifice.

THE ZIONISTS—left or otherwise—were regarded by the Bundists as hopelessly engaged in a project both utopian and reactionary. The endeavor to create a Jewish state in distant Palestine could only detract from the struggle in Russia, where the real future of the Jews would remain. To the Labor Zionists, who consolidated in Russia in 1906 under Ber Borochov's leadership, the Jewish problem was first and foremost a *political* problem and could not be resolved in Russia, or anywhere else in the diaspora. Borochov attempted a Marxist analysis of nationalism, according to which Marx's notion of relations of production would be supplemented by geographic, anthropological, and historical "conditions of production" that defined the emergence of nations. Having no land of their own, the Jews, and particularly Jewish workers, had "abnormal" conditions of production and must be resigned to hold marginal, vulnerable roles in the productive process. This could only be altered by a thoroughgoing revolution in Jewish life.

Borochov—and Nachman Syrkin before him—presented what must be considered a much more radical critique of Jewish life than did the Bundists, whom Plekhanov once derided as "Zionists with seasickness." The radicalism of the left Zionists consisted in their assertion that a revolution in the society in which Jews were living would not solve their problem, and that political, not just cultural, self-determination was necessary. "A classless society and national sovereignty," argued Syrkin in 1898, "are the only means of completely solving the Jewish problem." Only in a Jewish state could the Jewish proletariat, *on its own grounds* and taking part in all levels of the productive process, play a role in the struggle for international socialism.

Nonetheless, inasmuch as both sought national *and* socialist solutions to the Jewish question, the Bund and the left Zionists found themselves attacked from all sides and, of course, by each other. In the end, the Bund's role in Jewish history was as tragic as it was heroic. It mobilized Jewish workers to defend themselves as no group had before, but its faith in a Jewish socialist future in Eastern Europe proved to be chimerical. The Bund was suppressed by the Bolsheviks in Russia, and its last mass base in Poland was destroyed by Hitler. The "utopian" Zionists, on the other hand, succeeded in building a Jewish state and in the process what is perhaps the most successful example of agrarian socialism, the kibbutz. With the rise of Menahem Begin and the ongoing disarray of the Israeli labor movement (a disarray whose origins long precede the actual electoral victory of the Israeli right), the socialist and universal components of the socialist Zionist synthesis have, however, become more and more eclipsed. The harsh, and often unanticipated, realities of the successful struggle for national independence—particularly as it concerns the Arab question—will be an ongoing dilemma for the next generation of Israelis. Still, by its military might, Israel guarantees that it is the costliest place in the world to raise a hand against a Jew.

BEFORE THE VIOLENCE OF 1881, Jewish politics qua Jewish politics was, in Frankel's terms, "purely auxiliary." Change, it was believed, could only come about through a process of liberalization that might one day emerge from St. Petersburg. After 1881 a new banner was unfurled, and on it was proclaimed "Self-Emancipation!"—a phrase coined by Leo Pinsker, an Odessa intellectual who was transformed by the fateful events of that year from integrationist into proto-Zionist. *Self*-emancipation, the effort to take their fate into their own hands, meant for the Jews a reentry as an active subject on the stage of world history. For those, ranging from the Bund to the left Zionists, who wished to synthesize nationalism and internationalism, internal conflicts were perhaps unavoidable. Those very tensions are the true source of the richness of the history that Jonathan Frankel's book captures.

In the eyes of Frankel's protagonists, to avoid such strains was to simplify and shun the true nature of the crisis Jews faced: just where and how were Jews to find their place in the new, rapidly changing world that was emerging? "The working men have no country," wrote Marx. With the hindsight of the last 130 years and with the dark shadow of the Holocaust still present, this much is sure: the Jews did not. At least, not until 1948. "One should not . . . *simplify* the question," Ber Borochov once remarked during a debate over Zionist goals, "instead of *solving* it." Today we might add that defining the questions is still easier than solving them. □

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Ronald Radosh

Two Souls of Communism

STEVE NELSON, AMERICAN RADICAL, by Steve Nelson, James R. Barret, and Rob Ruck. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 454 pp. $19.95.

HOLLYWOOD RED: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LESTER COLE. Palo Alto: Ramparts Press. 448 pp. $12.95.

Lester Cole and Steve Nelson were two American Communists whose active years in the party coincided—the years of the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, and the early cold war. Yet their experience and what they learned from it diverge considerably.

Steve Nelson is that rarity American Marxists are always looking for—an authentic working-class radical. He arrived in the United States as a Croatian immigrant in 1920, and almost immediately found himself at work in a North Philadelphia slaughterhouse. To immigrants like Nelson, the Communist party became a vehicle for Americanization. His memoir offers us a fascinating account of his years in the CP—organizing miners in the Pennsylvania anthracite coal fields; at work in the Fisher body plant in Detroit, where he was among the first to organize an auto workers' union; volunteering to fight in the Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War; working as a Comintern courier in China and Germany, and, during the war years, organizing laborers and seamen in California. Nelson eventually rose to the leadership level and ended his active years in the drearier role of a full-time CP functionary.

Anyone who thinks that America never had political prisoners would do well to read Nelson's account of his Pittsburgh years, and of the treatment he received after being convicted of "sedition" for his open Communist views. What makes Nelson's reflections valuable is his ability to look back on his political life, and to make tough judgments.

But, unfortunately, not when it comes to reevaluating critical foreign policy issues. Nelson tells us that he served abroad—including China—as a Comintern courier between 1931 and 1933. It was a period, he writes, when the Comintern and the Soviet party were trying to "service the needs of the growing national liberation movements in Asia and Africa." Thus Nelson took instructions from Wang Ming to the Chinese Communists, who were facing a major assault from Chiang Kai-shek's forces against the Communist government in Kiangsi province, where some 5 million people were trapped.

What Nelson does not tell his readers is that it was precisely Stalin's policy that had led to this near disaster, and that the advice he carried from Moscow, as Fernando Claudin writes in *The Communist Movement*, marked "a last attempt by the Comintern to re-establish its control and authority over the Chinese section," an attempt that "almost resulted in a catastrophe even worse than that of 1927." The resulting military setback for the Chinese Red Army facilitated the rise of Wang Ming's main opponent, Mao Tse-tung, who had previously been ousted on instructions from Moscow. So much for Nelson's major contributions to what he refers to simplistically and falsely as helping the Comintern play a "positive role" in seeking to "overturn the system of imperialism."

Looking back at the party's purge of wartime leader Earl Browder—a step demanded by the Soviet Union as the cold war grew hot—Nelson comments that he and others might have used the occasion to move their party "toward greater internal democracy, a reorientation toward American realities, and independence vis-à-vis the Soviet Union." They were wrong, Nelson admits, to reject Browder's efforts "to stimulate a deeper study of American history and political realities."

Nelson also acknowledges that American Communists contributed to their own isolation in the cold-war era by refusing even to consider that it "took two sides to heat up the cold war." The decline in support of the CP among unionists who had been in its orbit during the war could not be solely attributed to a right-wing offensive. Nelson also stresses that the party structure of "democratic centralism," which allowed a small cadre to be effective, "also made us more vulnerable to Stalinism." But although Nelson left the party in 1957, it was not until the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that he suffered his own Kronstadt. That intervention forced him to admit what he had long denied: "Stalinism was more than the mentality of one maniac; it was a product of an essentially undemocratic system."

Nelson's life in the party, paradoxically, led him to an appreciation of America's democratic system. He recounts with humor how projecting the Soviet Union as a model for socialism "just didn't cut with

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a lot of men in the shop," and how he sought to rebuff top CP staffers, those with "fewer day-to-day connections in the factories," who always insisted that their auto-shop paper carry more news about the U.S.S.R. than other publications.

Nelson's growing faith in democracy eventually led him to break with communism and to espouse what he now calls democratic socialism.

NOT SO FOR LESTER COLE. His memoir reads like a document meant to prove Murray Kempton's acerbic comment that the Hollywood Communists functioned in a world that had "very little of a reality at all." Cole was one of the founders of the Screen Writers' Guild; yet, in his own words, he and other Hollywood Reds often "worked and lived entirely differently from party members in the working class." Party meetings invariably included members who "were earning thousands a week." Cole organized producers, directors, and writers "between sets of tennis" and "drinks and shop talk." No wonder Steve Nelson could never "shake my awe at meeting some of these people." They were hardly part of his working-class milieu.

Cole's political activity eventually led to being blacklisted, after serving time in prison with the original Hollywood Ten. So much has been written on this topic that one hoped Cole's remembrances would shed some new light on those dark years. Alas, his account reads like a Hollywood gossip column—some juicy tidbits thrown in, with little real substance.

Cole often writes to settle old political scores. John Howard Lawson is most often remembered as the dean of the Hollywood Reds—the tough Marxist theoretician who got the other CP members in the film colony to toe the line. But Cole seems to want that mantle for himself. He chastises the late Lawson for seeming "to hold fast" to Browderism, which Cole defines simply as "social democratic collaboration with capitalism." (Cole does not tell us that he too certainly must have held fast to Browderism when Browder was in command.)

Cole argues that during the World War II period people joined the CP "not so much out of deep intellectual and humanist motivation [as he did himself, he implies] but on the basis of personal friendship." This becomes an excuse to condemn another apostate member of the Hollywood Ten—the late Dalton Trumbo, whom Cole can never forgive for his famous "only victims" statement. Trumbo joined the party, Cole explains, only "to be with his friends."

Cole does try to address himself to the one issue that critics of the Hollywood Communists have always raised—why didn't they admit to their Communist beliefs and membership? He answers that during the witch-hunt years such admission would have legitimized the HUAC headhunters' quest, since to admit one was a Communist during "conditions of whipped-up hatred" meant that one would then reap "the whirlwind of a savage, hysteria-driven mob." Maybe so. But that does not explain why the Hollywood Reds also hid their views in the 1940s, at the height of their wartime coalition with FDR liberals. Cole writes that when he was vice-president of the Guild in 1942, admitting to party membership "would harm my effectiveness," since conservative opponents of the union were arguing it was controlled by Reds. He had to pretend to be a good left-wing liberal, since "open identification would provide more ammunition for the enemy propaganda."

Cole does not seem to realize that if he was sincerely serving writers in the Guild—as evidence suggests he was—then openness about his political views would have undermined the argument that he had a hidden, private revolutionary agenda. It was the duplicity of the group that strengthened the conservatives' red-baiting and made it effective.

The American CP produced people as different as Steve Nelson and Lester Cole. It says a lot about the party that the Nelsons all left and the party remained in the hands of the Coles. And Cole, it seems, still does not even realize that crimes were committed in Russia during the Stalin years. Perhaps some day he will sneak a glance at Antonov-Ovseyenko or at an accepted dissident, such as Roy

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Medvedev. In the meantime, nothing he writes challenges the judgment reached by the historians of the blacklist years, Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund. Despite the Communists' accomplishments, such as their antifascist and union activities, as Ceplair and Englund write in *The Inquisition in Hollywood*, the Hollywood Reds "could not escape some association with the actions, errors, and crimes of international communism." □

Henry C. Fleisher

Political Struggles in the CIO

COMMUNISM, ANTICOMMUNISM, AND THE CIO, by Harvey A. Levenstein. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. 364 pp. $29.95.

In the autumn of 1935 President John L. Lewis of the Mine Workers, recognizing that the political climate had created a unique opportunity for the unionization of the mass-production industries—and despairing of persuading the AFL craft unions to relinquish their jurisdictional claims over the skilled workers in those industries—called together the committee of union leaders that became the CIO.

In Moscow at that time—the years after Hitler's seizure of power in Germany and the obliteration of the German Communist party—Stalin called for a change in international Communist tactics in order to concentrate on an international antifascist policy that might strengthen the defense of the Soviet Union.

In the United States these two powerful trends came into a continuing and usually uneasy relationship within the Congress of Industrial Organizations and a number of its union affiliates. That up-and-down, in-and-out relationship of the leaders of the CIO and those union leaders who were either Communist party members or generally undeviating followers has long fascinated journalists who covered the events in the years 1935–50, as well as labor historians, political scientists, and sociologists.

Professor Harvey A. Levenstein of the History Department of McMaster University at Hamilton, Ontario, has delved deeply into the history of the Communists in the CIO, looking with particular care at a few of the unions in which the Communist bloc was most successful, and following the tangled events that led, at the CIO's 1949 convention, to the expulsion of about a dozen unions from the CIO on grounds—whether expressly stated or not—that they were Communist-dominated. For those who lived through these events, Levenstein's book refreshes old memories. For a younger generation, the volume presents a recapitulation of an exciting yet troubled period in the history of the American trade-union movement.

Levenstein sets forth his facts with such clarity and strength, one does not easily recognize that many of his "facts" are indeed in error. These lapses from accuracy range from the misspelling of names to a mistaken attribution of CIO affiliation to unions that never had it—including Ronald Reagan's Screen Actors Guild.

Levenstein has also omitted many significant facts—understandable, perhaps, in order to keep his study within manageable limits. But it is difficult to understand the omission of any mention of Arthur J. Goldberg, who became general counsel of the CIO and the Steelworkers after Lee Pressman's departure in the spring of 1948. Goldberg—later to become secretary of labor, Supreme Court justice, and ambassador to the United Nations—quickly became the confidant and friend of Philip Murray, the CIO president. Although the political estrangement between the CIO leadership and the bloc of Communist union leaders had been growing in the postwar years—a reflection of the decay of the wartime Soviet-American alliance—the appointment of Goldberg to the CIO's most important staff post reflected a sharp new emphasis in CIO policy. As events moved toward a showdown, it was Goldberg who successfully advocated a "due process" method for the expulsion proceedings. Goldberg argued with those in the CIO's top levels who wished, in the heated temper of the times, to "just throw the bastards out." The due process procedure resulted—contrary to the Communists' boastful claims that they would have the decisions overturned in the courts—in one or two federal court decisions that quickly wiped out the expellees' claims for reversal. How Levenstein could

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have all but ignored this series of events is difficult to understand.

Equally if not more troubling is the philosophic foundation of Levenstein's study. It is based on the extremely dubious theory that American union members—since they do not share much of the socialist philosophic tradition of their Canadian and European brothers and sisters—really do not care who leads their union so long as they are monetarily successful. This may be true in some cases at some time—the experience of the Teamsters comes to mind—but it was certainly not the case in most of the CIO unions. There were fierce debates and decisive actions by the rank and file in many unions; the workers did care.

LEVENSTEIN HAS NO ILLUSIONS about the effect of Soviet control over Communist parties in the years his study covers. He also writes explicitly about American Communist party control over its members in the elected leadership and on the staffs of various CIO unions. Nevertheless, he characterizes a good deal of criticism of the Communist union leaders as "red-baiting"—all but suggesting that while scholars have the right to call a spade a spade, it's demagoguery when an anti-Communist union official does the same thing.

The book goes farther than this: it argues a thesis that in the period studied, Communist labor leaders were competent, successful, dedicated to their unions, effective and, as if to prove all this, engaged in constant covert struggles with the Communist party's political officials to keep the more atrocious Communist policies out of their unions. Levenstein suggests that the evidence presented by the CIO at the various expulsion hearings concerning party-line stories and editorials on foreign policy in union publications was really a cheap shot. Since the members really didn't care about foreign policy, says Levenstein, the union officers plugged the Communist viewpoint on that subject in their publications to mollify the CP, and to permit their own relative independence on allegedly more important matters. Throughout the book one is continually troubled by the fact that Communist union leaders all but escape personal criticism—even though some were incompetent, a few corrupt, and many placed Communist policy interests above the needs and viewpoints of their union members. On the other hand, Philip Murray scarcely rates the characterization of "duplicitous," and Walter Reuther was certainly no more, and probably a good deal less, opportunistic than most of his antagonists.

All of this places Levenstein in a difficult position to understand or explain the expulsion of the Communist-dominated unionists. "In the end, then," he writes, "the Communists were destroyed for reasons that had little to do with their merits as trade unionists."

The Communists, in fact, were "destroyed" because, as elected officers of trade unions in a democratic society, their membership in a party controlled by a foreign dictator had *everything* to do with "their merits as trade unionists." □

John Henry Jones

Fight for Freedom

THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK EQUALITY, 1954–1980, by Harvard Sitkoff. Eric Foner, Consulting Editor. New York: Hill and Wang. 259 pp. $6.95.

Americans—both black and white—need more books like Harvard Sitkoff's moving account of the fierce "struggle for black equality" that consumed the nation from the late '50s until the recent past.

The opening chapter, "Up From Slavery" (recalling the title of Booker T. Washington's autobiography), is an incisive account of the second-class status forced upon black Americans "by force, intimidation, . . . statute," and custom, with the collusion of the Supreme Court of the late 19th century. By the opening of the 20th century, Sitkoff concludes, "the Southern way had become the American way."

The author gives a graphic account of some of the most dramatic incidents in American history: the start of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott that began to break the back of segregation in public accommodations; the emergence of Martin Luther King; the courageous black students who challenged Jim Crow at Southern lunch counters; the fearful Freedom Rides; and the counter terror of both the official and private racist opposition.

Sitkoff also writes about the defeat of the move-

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ment in Albany, Georgia; the internal disputes that shook the Students' Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); the vacillation of the Kennedy administration; the rivalry between the various black American organizations, such as the Committee for Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the role of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam.

In the chapter "The Dream Deferred" (entitled after a poem by Langston Hughes), Sitkoff describes the "long hot summers" of the middle 1960s, when numerous riots in several cities shocked and seared the consciousness of the nation. Blacks rioted, he observes, ". . . to enter the mainstream of . . . society, to be treated like outsiders no longer." He reviews the turning point of Dr. King's career when the eloquent advocate of nonviolence denounced the war in Vietnam: "The bombs in Vietnam explode at home. . . . The promises of the Great Society have been shot down on the battlefield of Vietnam," King charged, and soon thereafter he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

A gigantic white backlash was unleashed when President Nixon pursued his "Southern strategy," Sitkoff asserts. It continued to a lesser degree under President Ford who "appealed to the same backlash emotions as had his predecessor."

Sitkoff notes that while black Americans have achieved significant gains,

> . . . [they] did not result in equality because of the lack of a thorough economic transformation in the status of Afro-Americans. Despite the end of Jim Crow, the black struggle did not result in racial equality. . . . However dark the moment seems, a new day will surely dawn. The struggle to complete the unfinished business of American democracy will endure until its fulfillment.

The book concludes with an excellent annotated bibliography. □

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LETTERS

Appeal to Brezhnev

Editors:

We should like you and your readers to take note of the following Appeal from the American Peace Movement to Soviet Premier Brezhnev:

AS ACTIVISTS in the American peace movement dedicated to the abolition of all nuclear weapons, we protest the actions of the Soviet government in detaining independent Soviet peace activists and seeking to prohibit their activities.

Such actions—taken even as the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament unfolds and after hundreds of thousands rallied on June 12 for disarmament—is a violation of the Helsinki Accords guaranteeing freedom of expression, to which the Soviet Union is a signatory. We welcome the recent Soviet renunciation of first-use of nuclear weapons. However, it belies the Soviet claim to be "peace-loving," when independent Soviet peace activists—our brothers and sisters in the movement—are labeled "provocative, illegal and antisocial."

Unity in the struggle for disarmament requires that all citizens of the world have the right to form peace movements independent of governmental or quasigovernmental control. Such independent peace committees are essential to building the broadest possible movement against nuclear arms and calling all nuclear powers to account for their arsenals.

As activists opposed to actions by the Reagan administration that would escalate the arms race, we the undersigned call upon you to release Soviet peace activists now detained, cease harassment of their activities, and allow their voices, too, to be heard on this most vital of issues—the issue of survival in the face of nuclear war.

Robert F. Drinan, S.J.	Rev. Paul Mayer
Michael Harrington	Randall Forsberg
Norma Becker	David Cortright
Hon. Ted Weiss	David McReynolds
Noam Chomsky	Janice Fine
Bella Abzug	Jack Newfield
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Grace Paley	Rev. Richard Deats
Gordon Adams	Leon Shull
Mel Wulf	Bogdan Denitch

and seventeen other leading American peace activists.

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Orthodoxy

Editors:

I recently read Bernard Avishai's essay "*Commentary* and the American Jews" in the form of a *Dissent* pamphlet. Although the editorial focus of *Commentary* deserves intelligent criticism, Avishai's only intention is to indulge the quasiparanoid fantasies of those who have little acquaintance with *Commentary*. Avishai writes in an ethically questionable manner. One example will have to suffice.

Near the end of his article Avishai refers briefly to Robert Alter, "A New Theory of Kashrut," *Commentary*, August 1979, pp. 46–52. These are Avishai's words:

> . . . *Commentary* has gradually, but surely, reinstated Orthodox Judaism, really a manipulated version of it, lacking in authentic faith, as the only American Jewish practice to match Zionism in inspiring the cohesion necessary for Jews

Coming
In Our Next Issue:

The Legacies of New Deal Liberalism

by Theda Skocpol

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to make their fights. No more articles by anthropologists like Erich Isaac on dietary laws and circumcision. Instead, we see Robert Alter's attack on the "scientific" views of Jean Soler regarding "Kashrut". . . .

Avishai is saying three things about Alter's article. First, it is an "attack," that is, a work of more belligerence than intelligence. Second, it is unscientific, even antiscientific, since it is pointedly contrasted with an article by an anthropologist, and since the quotation marks around the word "scientific" suggest that Soler's argument is scientific in Alter's own eyes and that Alter actually uses this word to describe it. Finally, Alter's article represents a defensively Orthodox Jewish viewpoint. All three elements of Avishai's characterization, however, are false.

"Attack." There is nothing in Alter's article to which the word "attack" can reasonably be applied. Alter recounts Soler's views on the dietary laws very accurately *and accepts their validity almost without reservation.* The following quotation is typical of his evaluative remarks: "This is, I think, a crucial perception about the way the minds of the biblical writers work." Alter's chief objection to Soler's paper does not concern Soler's interpretation of the Jewish dietary laws at all, but rather the conclusion about Jewish thinking in general, which Soler draws from that interpretation. A writer less tactful than Alter would not have hesitated to call this conclusion racist. Alter, however, merely brings to light certain facts that belie Soler's conclusion about the Jewish mind, coolly demonstrating that as a literary critic Soler has made some mistakes. Soler's theory remains "an advance in understanding."

"Scientific." Even when Alter disagrees with Soler he never taxes him with being "scientific." Alter's implicit stance toward Soler is that both of them are literary critics: e.g., "A French Structuralist should hardly need to be reminded that a single signifier can point to very different things being signified. . . ." Despite what the quotation marks around the word in Avishai's article suggest, Alter *never* uses the word "scientific" of Soler or his views. Avishai gets the word from a passage in Alter's introduction, where he is referring not to Soler but to interpreters whom Soler opposes just as much as Alter does himself.

"Orthodox Judaism." I utterly fail to see where Avishai finds support for Orthodoxy in this article. The issue of how, or whether, Jews should observe is not part of Alter's project in the piece and he is accordingly silent about it. His article could perfectly well have been written by an atheist who had knowledge of the relevant texts. Of course, Alter does display great respect for the text he is reading and eagerness to penetrate its mysteries, but then so does any good literary critic: is the interpreter of Sophocles an advocate of Olympian worship?

I urge the editors and readers of *Dissent* to consult Alter's essay and decide for themselves whether Avishai is someone they can trust to review an article for them. It is a serious matter to insinuate that an intellectual is antiscientific, especially in these times, and especially when to do so requires the malicious misrepresentation of published work. I think that Bernard Avishai owes Robert Alter and the readers of *Dissent* an apology.

Bruce A. Heiden
Ithaca, New York □

On Good Taste

Editors:

I say nothing for or against William Buckley here. However, I regret the fact that a magazine such as *Dissent* would publish the article written by Steve Meiss (Summer 1982). Mr. Buckley deserves something more serious. So does *Dissent*, which has always considered that it was devoted to responsible socialism and responsible reporting.

In my opinion, the level of Mr. Meiss's writing and thinking does not rise above the abusive rhetoric of the radical students of the '60s—one of whom Mr. Meiss may have been before becoming a toolmaker. But I don't believe that any genuine toolmaker would ever speak so discourteously about anyone's intellectual work or opinions.

Phrases such as "intellectual scratching" and "religious baggage" have no place in *Dissent*. Neither do tasteless sarcasms simplifying the serious problems of the times. Why was the article printed?

Martha Goldstein
New York City □

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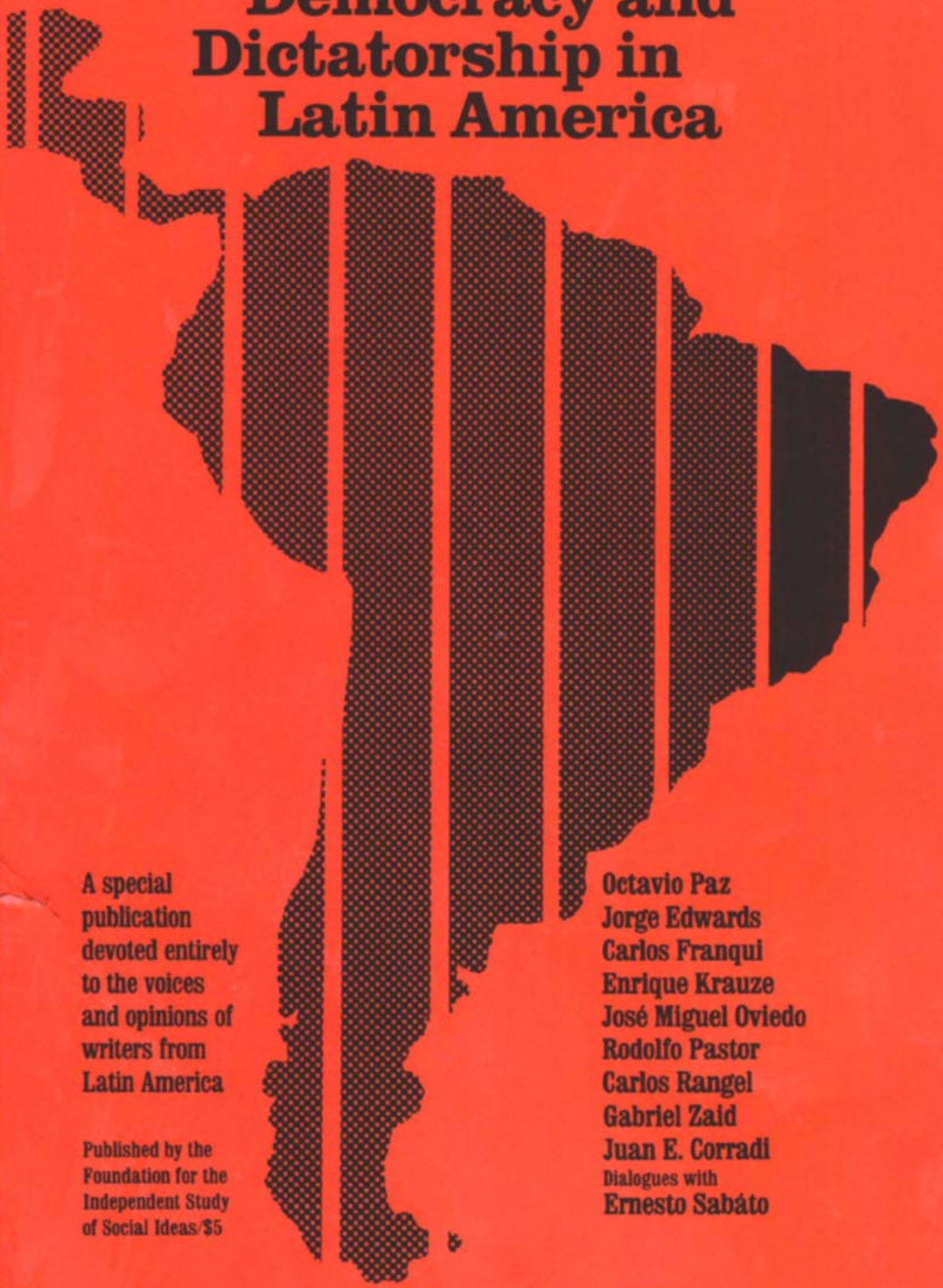

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